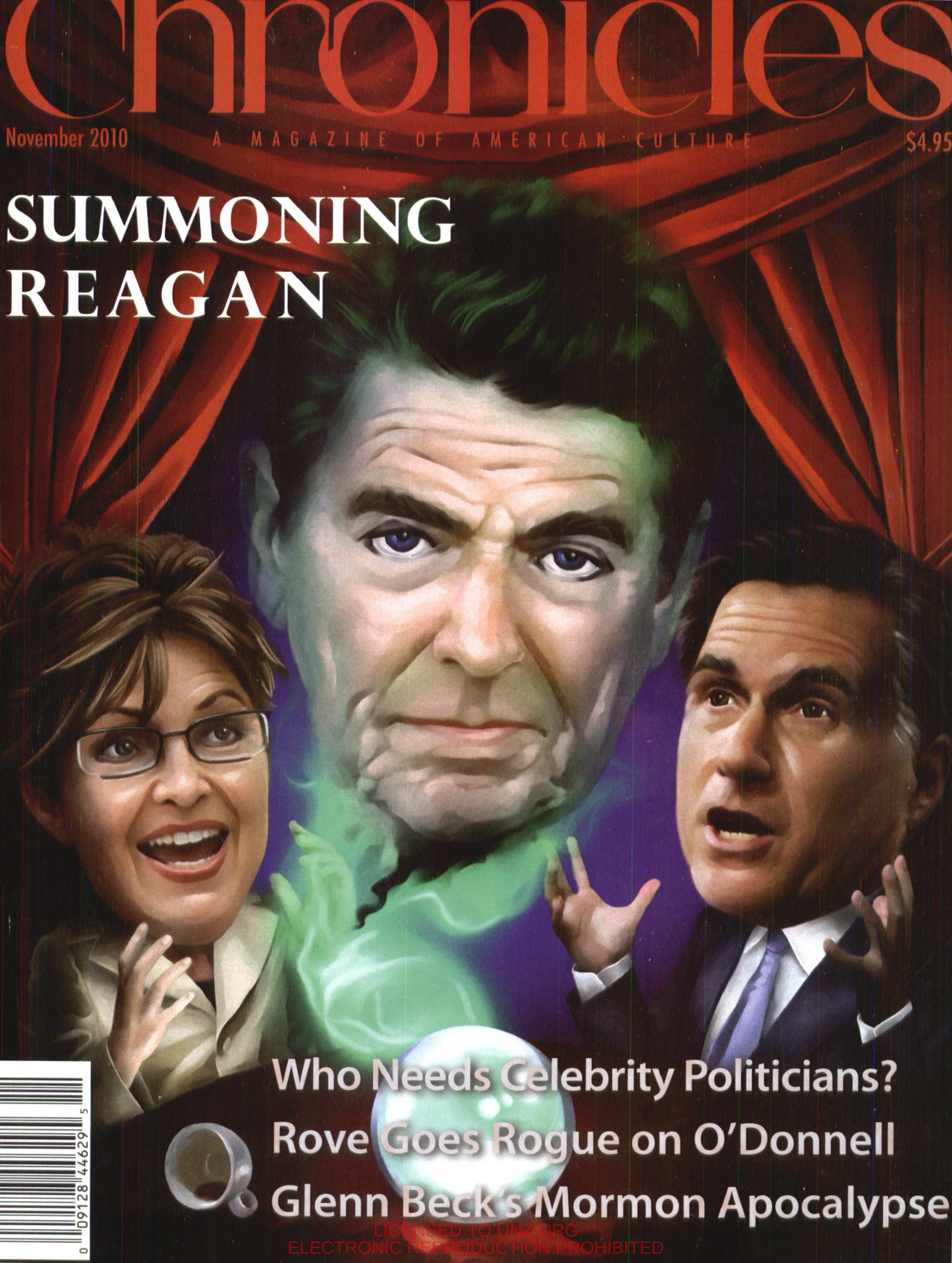
Chronicles

November 2010 A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE $4.95

SUMMONING REAGAN



Who Needs Celebrity Politicians?

Rove Goes Rogue on O'Donnell

Glenn Beck's Mormon Apocalypse

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Rockford Institute and *Chronicles*' Sixth Annual Winter School

The Age of Augustus

Rome • January 12-19, 2011

Join *Chronicles* editor Thomas Fleming, his wife, Gail, and Rockford Institute vice president Christopher Check for daily guided walks to Rome's churches, museums, and archeological sites.

Listen to lectures and participate in discussions on Vergil, Horace, Livy, and Ovid, and on the emperor who labored nobly to restore the glory of republican Rome.

Enjoy four-star lodging at, and magnificent views from, the Grand Hotel Gianicolo.

Gather with other *Chronicles* readers for four group meals and spirited conversation.

The Price for the Winter School Includes:

- seven nights' (arrive Jan. 12; checkout on Jan. 19) lodging at the Grand Hotel Gianicolo (*grandhotelgianicolo.it/english.html*);
- daily breakfast; four group meals (either dinner or lunch);
- all lectures, discussions, and walking tours;
- and selected entrance fees to museums.

Winter School faculty:
Thomas and Gail Fleming, and Christopher Check

Prices*

Single	$1,895.00 EA	❑
Couple	$2,795.00 EA	❑
Shared Double	$1,595.00 EA	❑

Registration is limited. Previous Winter Schools have sold out. Registration fees are based on current exchange rates; the Institute reserves the right to assess a fee, should rates change significantly at the dollar's expense. The Institute will make every effort to help find roommates for students who wish to take advantage of the shared-double rate. If no roommate is available, the difference between the shared-double rate and the single-occupancy rate will be assessed.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone/Fax _____

E-mail _____

❑Visa ❑MasterCard ❑AmEx ❑Discover ❑Check Encl.

Card No. _____ Exp. _____

❑ Please add my address to the Institute's e-mail list

To register, clip and mail this form along with a check or credit-card information to

The Rockford Institute/Winter School 2011
928 North Main Street
Rockford, Illinois 61103

Full-time undergraduate and graduate students interested in scholarships, anyone interested in supporting the Institute's Scholarship Fund, and anyone desiring more information should contact: Christopher Check, executive vice president, at (815) 964-5811 or visit *www.rockfordinstitute.org/events*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

BEYOND THE REVOLUTION

Freedom From Religion 10
by Thomas Fleming

VIEWS

Celebrity Politics, Savvy Sergeants 12
by Roger D. McGrath

Reaganism and the External Threat 16
by Wayne Allensworth

NEWS

A Watershed for the Left 20
by William J. Watkins, Jr.

REVIEWS

Cold War, Warm Friends 24
by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

John Lukacs, *The Legacy of the Second World War*
John Lukacs, ed., *Through the History of the Cold War: The Correspondence of George F. Kennan and John Lukacs*

Anarcho-Utopia Revisited 28
by R. Cort Kirkwood

Christopher A. Ferrara, *The Church and the Libertarian: A Defense of the Catholic Church's Teaching on Man, Economy, and State*

Our Aboriginal Future 30
by Andrei Navrozov

Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*

CORRESPONDENCE

The Benedict Bounce 34
by Stuart Reid

In Search of Flannery O'Connor 36
by Jeff Minick

VITAL SIGNS

On the Sullivan Translation of David, Part II by Timothy Murphy 42

The Borrowers' Crisis 46
by Mark G. Brennan

COLUMNS

Going Rove 23
by Justin Raimondo

Mormon Apocalypse, Part II 32
by Aaron D. Wolf

Starting at Ground Zero 33
by Scott P. Richert

Neo-Ottomans Triumphant 38
by Srdja Trifkovic

Myths of Terrorism 40
by Philip Jenkins

Dan Daly 41
by Roger D. McGrath

They All Laughed 48
Farewell (L'affaire Farewell)
by George McCartney

Stoned in the Desert 50
by Taki Theodoracopulos

POETRY

"North Light" 19
"Report From Summer" 27
by David Mason

Polemics & Exchanges 4
American Proscenium 6
Cultural Revolutions 7

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ásátruphobia

As one who has subscribed to and enjoyed *Chronicles* for 20 years, I have decided not to renew my subscription after reading Jerry D. Salyer's "Where the Demons Dwell: The Antichrist Right" (*Views*, August).

As an Ásátruer, I took great umbrage at his biased misrepresentation of the Heathen movement. Most Heathenist/Ásátru groups are not political, and Mr. Salyer's statements are the result of his own ignorant religious bigotry in labeling Ásátru part of the "Antichrist Right."

If his type of Christianity is what you are defending, then I want nothing more to do with your magazine.

—Robert Blumetti
Newton, NJ

Mr. Salyer Replies:

Mr. Blumetti might as well accuse me of making a "biased misrepresentation" of Wicca and of Bill "Oakwyse" Melnyck's Episcopaganism, too. My article did not address "the Heathen movement" as such, but instead dwelt upon a somewhat nebulous right-wing anti-Christian community that counts neopaganism as one of its elements. Perhaps this point was insufficiently clear—though I should have thought the title would have given it away, along with the explanation in the first paragraph of what I meant by "Antichrist Right" (phrases like "the Antichrist Right's neopagan aspect," and so on).

Nevertheless, I did commit a little space to critiquing neopaganism generally and concluded one paragraph as follows: "As a 'tradition,' neopaganism has hardly been passed down unbrokenly . . . It is paganesque, not pagan." While I can sympathize to a point with his admiration for Norse lore, I'm afraid nothing in Mr. Blumetti's complaint comes close to altering my view.

Poor Richies

I did not realize how bad the plight of the very rich was until I read John Seiler's editorial in the September issue ("The Panic of 2011," *American Proscenium*). Imagine Bill Gates having to pay 55 percent of his fortune to the government upon his death, if the death tax is reintroduced. I don't suppose there is anything he can do about it either, except just pony up the 55 percent.

This tax destroys any incentive the rich have. Now, when Jack Welch left GE, his personal fortune was an estimated $900 million. And just to help poor old Jack out in his retirement, Welch still had the use of an $80,000-per-month apartment in Manhattan where his needs for food, flowers, laundry, and wine were tended to by GE. Welch also had the use of company luxury vehicles, season tickets to sporting events, and jaunts on the company Gulfstream. Now his heirs will have to live on half of what they might have had if the Democrats had not gotten greedy.

Being a CEO of a major American corporation is tough work. The CEOs with the five fattest paychecks in 1999 all fired more than a thousand people or at least five percent of their employees. It is not easy to let thousands of people go, even if it does help your profit picture, which helps the old CEO paycheck.

Yes, these are hard times for the rich. The 400-richest families in America, who saw their wealth increase by some $400 billion during the Bush years, have now accumulated $1.27 trillion in wealth. Four hundred families! Now they will have to pay more taxes. It will be a burden on some, undoubtedly.

Of course the rich work harder than

EDITOR
Thomas Fleming
EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Scott P. Richert
SENIOR EDITOR, BOOKS
Chilton Williamson, Jr.
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Aaron D. Wolf
DESIGNER
Melanie Anderson
INTERIOR ARTIST
George McCartney, Jr.
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Katherine Dalton
Tom Landess
Tom Piatak
Joseph Sobran†
James O. Tate
Taki Theodoracopulos
Clyde Wilson
CORRESPONDING EDITORS
Wayne Allensworth
Donald Livingston
Roger D. McGrath
William Mills
William Murchison
Claude Polin
FOREIGN-AFFAIRS EDITOR
Srdja Trifkovic
EUROPEAN EDITOR
Andrei Navrozov
FILM EDITOR
George McCartney
LEGAL-AFFAIRS EDITOR
Stephen B. Presser
POETRY EDITOR
Catharine Savage Brosman
CIRCULATION MANAGER
Cindy Link
PUBLISHER
The Rockford Institute

A publication of The Rockford Institute. Editorial Office: 928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103.
www.chroniclesmagazine.org
Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.

Advertising Office: Burr Media Group LLC, P.O. Box 156, Vienna, VA 22183. Advertising e-mail: *RBurr@BurrMediaGroup.com.*
Advertising Phone: (703) 893-3632.

Subscription Department:
P.O. Box 0567, Selmer, TN 38375.
Call 1-800-877-5459.

Copyright © 2010 by The Rockford Institute. All rights reserved.

Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture (ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for $44.99 (foreign subscriptions add $15 for surface delivery, $48 for Air Mail) per year by The Rockford Institute, 928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Preferred periodical postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Chronicles*, P.O. Box 0567, Selmer, TN 38375.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rockford Institute or of its directors. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE
Vol. 34, No. 11 • November 2010
Printed in the United States of America

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

most because 66 percent of the income growth between 2001 and 2007 went to the top 1 percent of all Americans. Contrast their performance with the fact that a staggering 43 percent of feckless Americans have less than $10,000 saved up for retirement.

The rich help the economy by investing their money in it; 83 percent of all U.S. stocks are in the hands of 1 percent of all Americans. The government should not take more of their money, as then they will not be able to invest as much in our economy to help it grow the way it has been growing under the reduced taxes passed by the Bush administration.

Last year, the top-25 hedge-fund managers made a combined $25 billion, but because of tax policy their lobbyists helped write (I guess they felt it their civic duty to lend a hand and assist the government in formulating tax laws), they pay a lower effective tax rate than many teachers, nurses, and police officers.

Taking more from the rich is arrant socialism, just like making everyone buy health insurance from private corporate insurers is. The healthcare industry doesn't need any more inefficiencies as, before Obama socialized medical care, most economists estimated fully one third of the money spent on healthcare went for administrative costs.

Not only do the Democrats want to harm our economy by increasing taxes on the rich, but they want to reimpose regulations on businesses. This, after all the benefits we have reaped from widespread deregulation under past administrations.

It is enough to make Rush Limbaugh weep.

—Robert A. Charron
Raleigh, NC

Mr. Seiler Replies:

Mr. Charron goes quite far afield from the limited purpose of my article, which was to point out that investors were raking in profits in 2010 to avoid paying the substantially higher tax rates of 2011, and that these reactions will trigger an economic crash in 2011. I hope I'm wrong. But since my article was published, matters have become worse as the Democrats who control Congress decided not to extend any of the Bush tax cuts, even for the middle class.

So, here's what will happen—assuming the lame-duck Congress in December does nothing—according to a list compiled by Americans for Tax Reform: The 10-percent income-tax bracket will rise to an expanded 15 percent. The 25-percent bracket will rise to 28 percent. The 28-percent bracket will rise to 31 percent. The 33-percent bracket will rise to 36 percent. And the 35-percent bracket will rise to 39.6 percent.

It's not just "the rich" who will pay more. It's you, too, Mr. & Mrs. Middle-Class America.

Also, the child tax credit drops from $1,000 to $500, a big hit on families. The death tax goes from 0 percent to 55 percent, which will murder small businesses and farms. The capital-gains tax goes from 15 percent to 20 percent; and the dividends tax, from 15 percent to 39.6 percent.

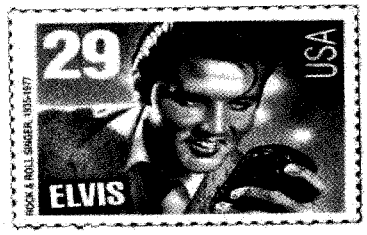
As to really rich people such as Bill Gates, whom Mr. Charron mentions, having to "pony up the 55 percent" death tax upon their entrance into eternity: They won't be paying it. Gates and his pal Warren Buffett, each worth more than $50 billion, have followed the Rockefellers' example in setting up "charities" that are tax-free. They and their heirs will still control the money—tax-free—while using it to manipulate policy. And like the Rockefellers, Gates and Buffett are obsessed with population control.

The rich always manage to keep their money. They can buy lawyers and accountants and politicians. My concern is the rest of us, who pay huge taxes and struggle to put food on the table for our families. President Bush's tax cuts helped the middle class, but they were defective because of their politically motivated expiration date. Along with the debasement of the dollar and the war-driven record deficits, the tax cuts/increases, as I pointed out, first goosed the economy, then crashed it.

As always, the way to recovery is sound money (the gold standard), lower taxes (especially on the middle class) and lower spending (ending the wars, bailouts, ObamaCare and other huge programs).

It's enough to make Grover Cleveland weep.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
CHRONICLES/POLEMICS
928 N. MAIN ST.
ROCKFORD, IL 61103



SAVE A STAMP!
E-MAIL YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

POLEMICS@CHRONICLESMAGAZINE.ORG

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Secretary Clinton's Human-Rights Scorecard

by William J. Watkins, Jr.

In late August, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton issued the Obama administration's first Universal Periodic Review (UPR) to the U.N. high commissioner for human rights. The purpose of the UPR is to give the United Nations "a partial snapshot of the current human rights situation in the United States, including some of the areas where problems persist in our society."

Secretary Clinton's report explains that, to Americans, human rights are dear because "they were the reason our nation was created." She insists that rights enshrined in the Constitution are universal in application. It does not matter whether a people has no historical experience with private property, voting, or freedom of expression. These "universal rights" should be applied to all peoples in every corner of the globe.

Although Secretary Clinton's history lesson and examination of rights are interesting, the real attention grabbers are the American infractions chronicled in the report. Citing FDR's 1941 "Four Freedoms" speech, she notes that Americans are not free from want and that current unemployment rates have human-rights implications that must be disclosed to the United Nations. The report observes that unemployment rates for Hispanics and blacks are several points higher than the rates for whites. Consequently, the United States must continue "to address such disparities by working to ensure that equal opportunity is not only guaranteed in law but experienced in fact by all Americans." Equal economic outcomes, according to the secretary, are human rights.

The UPR perceives human-rights issues in the recent housing-market collapse. Ignoring that the federal government pressured banks to lend money to individuals who simply were not creditworthy, Secretary Clinton complains that the "foreclosure crisis has disproportionately affected communities of color." Thus, Washington must focus "resources and efforts" to ferret out this new round of discrimination. It is certainly hard to have much sympathy for banks these days, but this damned-if-you-don't-lend and damned-when-you-do policy lacks even a modicum of fairness. One wonders what Washington would have said had the banks not tried to cut losses by foreclosing on collateral.

The report laments that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons are denied the right to "marry" in most U.S. jurisdictions. While "several states have reformed laws to provide for same-sex marriages, civil unions, or domestic partnerships," more work must be done. Secretary Clinton assures the United Nations that a goal of the Obama administration is "repeal of the [federal] Defense of Marriage Act" as well as the "'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' statute, which prevents gays and lesbians from serving openly in the military." The President has already appointed "several LGBT individuals to senior positions in the Executive Branch."

Assimilation and welcoming of immigrants is central to "our ability to innovate, our ties to the world, and our economic prosperity." Unfortunately, the report continues, one U.S. state departed from this goal by passing a law requiring local police to verify the immigration status of a person involved in a lawful stop, detention, or arrest. Yes, Secretary Clinton felt duty-bound to report Arizona to the United Nations for human-rights violations.

Never does the report mention that Arizona's S.B. 1070 gives the authorities no new power. Nor does it recognize that the police must be involved in a legitimate law-enforcement activity such as a traffic stop or arresting a lawbreaker (say, a person dealing meth or crack) before they inquire regarding immigration status. And before inquiring they must have "reasonable suspicion" that the subject is here illegally.

Instead of accurately explaining the Arizona law, Secretary Clinton simply assures the United Nations that this human-rights violation "is being addressed in a court action" and that "parts of the law are currently enjoined."

The UPR is 29 pages of liberal gibberish and could easily be laughed off but for two matters. First, the people in charge really believe that equal outcomes, "gay marriage," and open immigration are "human rights." And they aim to use the full power of the federal government to guarantee these "rights."

Second, our leaders are quite comfortable reporting alleged infractions to the United Nations. To report means to present oneself to a person in authority in accordance with that person's requirements. For example, a private reports to his sergeant and a servant reports to his master to give an account of their acts and omissions.

Nothing in the UPR indicates that the Obama administration has any misgivings about double-timing it to the United Nations to tattle on states or to swear fidelity to FDR's Four Freedoms. National sovereignty is not even a blip on the administration's screen.

The United States is party to 13 multilateral human-rights-related treaties and has signed but not ratified five more. These treaties provide excellent cover for the Obama administration to push its agenda. Americans should expect to see future expansions of federal power based on our duties to, or the dictates of, the United Nations. ◆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

O'Donnellmania

THE UPSET DEFEAT of long-time congressman and former governor Mike Castle by Christine O'Donnell in the Delaware Republican senatorial primary on September 14 revealed more about the frustrations of conservative voters with the GOP establishment than about the strengths of a long-shot Tea Party candidate. If ever there existed a Republican state leadership that fit the stereotypical country-club image, it would be the one in Delaware.

I vividly recall a disagreement I had with John Burris, the GOP's nominee for governor in 2000. In a public debate days before, he had claimed to be the genuine "pro-choice" candidate. When I challenged his pro-abortion stance, the best he could do was point to his opposition to partial-birth abortion. He was unable to explain how his contradictory position made any sense, and neither could voters that year. On another occasion, at GOP headquarters in 2004, a party official insisted that only "moderate" candidates like Arlen Specter could win statewide office in Pennsylvania. She was forced to concede, however, that her position did not account for the other sitting senator, Republican Rick Santorum. The fact that Santorum lost his 2006 reelection bid had much to do with the demoralization of his base following his endorsement of Specter over Pat Toomey in the senatorial primary, a race the latter would have won had the party establishment not intervened. Now Specter is gone, and Toomey is poised to win statewide office in Pennsylvania.

Meanwhile, O'Donnell had moved to Delaware in 2003 to work for the conservative nonprofit Intercollegiate Studies Institute (my former employer). Previously, she was a talking head on several cable news programs. What was striking about her tenure at ISI was her inflated belief in her own importance. Convinced of her celebrity status, she was not content to work for a company that forced her to function in a hierarchy that limited her independence. She would be gone from the office for days on end without anyone knowing where she was. Furthermore, she reacted poorly when required to report to a younger male coworker (who had several years' seniority over her) when her supervisor went on sabbatical to complete his Ph.D. Her insistence on equal female representation in the images of those who appeared on the organization's 50th-anniversary video history reflected both the liberal bias of the expensive New York production company she hired as well as her own feminist presuppositions about "what looked right." Her time spent working for another company during office hours led to her termination and a baseless $6.95 million "gender discrimination" lawsuit against ISI in 2005. But for someone with an inflated self-importance, the lawsuit was an entirely predictable response. Ever since her dismissal, she has eyed a Senate seat; a lower office was too low for her. Her financial problems, involving the failure to pay $12,000 in federal taxes in 2005 and defaulting on house payments in 2007, suggest an unwillingness to pursue employment options that do not offer the public attention she craves. In the pursuit of a Senate seat, she spent years cultivating a network of volunteers that would come to her aid every time she ran for office.

Since the GOP establishment refused to give the electorate a real choice by offering a serious challenge to the Democratic candidates, frustrated Delaware Republican voters had no option but to pick a candidate that would truly represent them, despite her many personal flaws. Indeed, it is an indictment of the party establishment that one of its favorites would be so thoroughly rejected by the rank and file. After years of voting for Castle as the lesser of two evils, Delaware conservatives finally had enough. Rush Limbaugh's endorsement of O'Donnell helped her cause. He acknowledged on his radio show that some conservatives did not like O'Donnell because of her lawsuit against ISI. Then he admitted that he knew nothing about ISI before the whole controversy arose, which tells us much about the bubble he lives in.

On matters of policy, O'Donnell is saying the right things. Whether she's up to the task is yet to be determined. (Joe Biden wasn't, and look where he ended up.) To say that O'Donnell has a big ego isn't much of an indictment, given what we know about past and present members of Congress. To paraphrase FDR, O'Donnell may be an egomaniac, but to disenchanted grassroots Republican voters, she's *their* egomaniac.

—John M. Vella

War Against the South

YOU HAVE TO WONDER when they're going to start digging up Confederate graves and tearing down the statues of R.E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. Until then, it seems, the campaign against the Confederacy and the Old South will not be complete.

In September, the University of Mississippi, or Ole Miss, banned the sale of any trinkets, memorabilia, or other gewgaws associated with the school's former mascot, Colonel Rebel. A few years ago, much to the chagrin of many alumni, the Colonel, whom the *New York Times* dubs a cross between Colonel Sanders and Mark Twain, was dropped because of his association with the bad old days of slavery and the evil, racist, misogynist, homophobic Confederates who fought against Saint Abraham Lincoln's Crusaders.

As the *Times* reported it, the ban on Colonel Rebel contraband "is part of a long-standing plan to recast the university's image, still tarnished by its reputation for racial strife in the 1960s, to signal that it is more tolerant and diverse. Confederate

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

battle flags were discouraged from football games years ago, and 'Dixie' is no longer the unofficial fight song."

"Most people associated with the university are interested in moving forward to an on-the-field mascot that will unify the entire Ole Miss community," Chancellor Dan Jones told the Memphis *Commercial Appeal* for a story about the search for a new mascot. Last year, the Associated Press reported, Jones asked the band to stop playing "Dixie" at sporting events because fans were shouting, "The South shall rise again." You can imagine how that frightened the literati in the departments of ethnic and gender studies. "Here at the University of Mississippi," Jones proclaimed in a letter to the "university community" (as the AP called Ole Miss), "there must be no doubt that this is a warm and welcoming place for all. We cannot even appear to support those outside our community who advocate a revival of racial segregation. We cannot fail to respond."

Of course, no one, including those who opposed them, took the song or Colonel Rebel as giving a cold, unwelcoming appearance. Colonel Rebel, alumni observed, was not a signal that the school is intolerant and not diverse. The Colonel Rebel Foundation labored mightily to save the mascot but, alas, like the men wearing gray and butternut at Vicksburg, lost to the superior forces of enlightened thinking. Even observing that the Colonel apparently was based on a black man named Ivy didn't help. Ever since the school ditched the Colonel, it has been trying to airbrush the mascot from its past and conjure a new one. In keeping with the maturity level of the modern college student, one suggestion was "Admiral Akbar," an ichthyic character from *Star Wars*. Happily, that idea now sleeps with the fishes.

The campaign continues farther north, in Virginia. Near the end of September, Gov. Bob McDonnell truckled down to a conference entitled "Race, Slavery and Civil War: The Tough Stuff of American History and Memory" and declared that April will no longer be known as Confederate History Month in the Old Dominion. Starting in 2011, the alleged conservative announced, it will be "Civil War" month. McDonnell made the move, he said, to atone for his mortal sin of neglecting to mention slavery in his proclamation for Confederate History Month this year.

Granted, former governors Tim Kaine and Mark Warner, two left-wing Democrats, scotched Confederate History Month, and Gov. James Gilmore, another "conservative" Republican, created something called "Virginia's Month for Remembrance of the Sacrifices and Honor of All Virginians Who Served in the Civil War." But McDonnell's surrender is particularly noteworthy because of the dust-up over this year's proclamation back in April. As reported here in May, McDonnell ducked into the bushes when the NAACP lit the fire under its kettles after McDonnell ignored the "peculiar institution." He surrendered almost immediately. In September, he apologized again.

"My major and unacceptable omission of slavery disappointed and hurt a lot of people—myself included," whined McDonnell. "And it is an error that will be fixed."

As the *Washington Post* reported, McDonnell viewed the conference "as a chance to reset the tone for Virginia's observance of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War." If that sounds ominous, it should. Said McDonnell, "One hundred and fifty years is long enough for Virginia to fight the Civil War"—an odd comment given the ongoing campaign to destroy the memory of noble Confederates such as Lee and Jackson, once considered heroes by all Americans. Moreover, a "modern Virginia has emerged from her past, strong, vibrant and diverse," he added. "Now a modern Virginia will take four years and remember that past with candor, with courage and with conciliation." How much conciliation is there when a Boy Scout troop, as happened a few years ago, is forced to drop the name of Robert E. Lee?

The *Post* editorialized that "[I]t took guts for Gov. Robert F. McDonnell (R) to issue a blunt and humble apology for his ham-handed attempts last spring to minimize the importance of slavery in the history of Virginia and the Civil War." McDonnell got what he wanted: approbation from the media elite.

Unsurprisingly, the evil, racist, misogynist, homophobic Sons of Confederate Veterans were none too happy. Calling McDonnell cowardly, an official observed that "[h]e didn't have the intestinal fortitude to stand up to his political enemies or the media."

But like most alleged conservatives in the apology business, McDonnell doesn't get it. He could sign a law declaring every day Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, and leftists would neither support him nor shrink from calling him a racist if it advanced their war against American history and tradition. Apologies go nowhere with the left, which is why McDonnell had to apologize again. They are, as Capt. Nathan Brittles told Mr. Pennell, a sign of weakness.

It doesn't take guts to get editorial praise from the *Post*. It takes guts to stand up to the withering fire the left would surely have unlimbered had McDonnell skipped the apology and unabashedly and courageously declared that April 2011 would indeed be Confederate History Month.

But as the unhappy member of the SCV noted, McDonnell cares more about climbing the ladder to higher political office than he does about defending Virginia's past and traditions.

In both cases, the object wasn't to squash a real threat to diversity, but to uproot traditional Southern symbols. Symbols and traditions are part of what holds a culture and a society together; the left knows it, and that is why they seek to destroy them.

The War Between the States might be over. But whatever McDonnell thinks, the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

war against the South continues . . . 150 years later.

—R. Cort Kirkwood

Joseph Sobran, R.I.P.

We are saddened to announce the death of our courageous longtime contributor, columnist, and friend Joseph Sobran, of whose passing we learned as this issue was going to press. We invite readers to see Chilton Williamson, Jr.'s column in the next issue of *Chronicles* (December), which will provide a more fitting tribute to Joe. May God grant his soul peace and eternal rest.

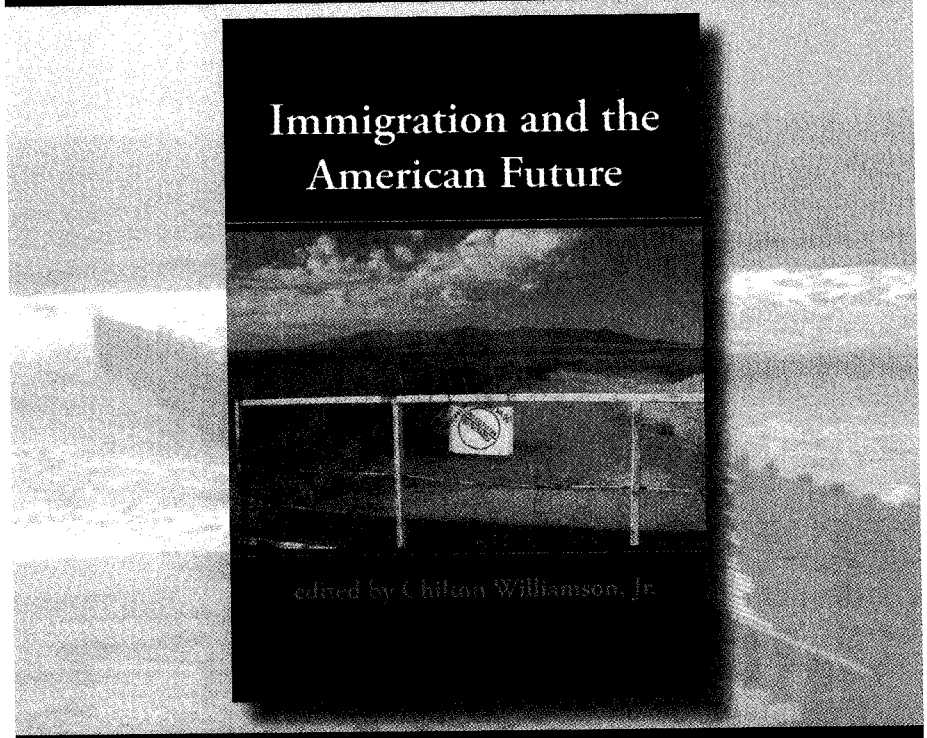
—The Editors

Obiter Dicta

Our poet this month is **David Mason**, the current poet laureate of Colorado, whose books include the verse novel *Ludlow* and the memoir *News From the Village*. His work can be found in *The New Yorker*, *The Nation*, *Poetry*, *The Hudson Review*, and many other magazines. He lives near the Garden of the Gods and teaches at Colorado College.

Our cover is provided by our interior artist, **George McCartney, Jr.** Mr. McCartney studied at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and received a bachelor's of art from the State University of New York at Geneseo. Since 1997, he has worked in various media in the fields of illustration, graphic design, and textiles. George resides in North Carolina with his wife, Kristin, and their children.

FROM CHRONICLES PRESS



14 HARD-HITTING CHAPTERS

Wayne Allensworth • James Bissett • David A. Hartman • Peter Brimelow • Edwin S. Rubenstein • James A. Bernsen and the Lone Star Foundation • Roger D. McGrath • Steven Greenhut • Thomas Fleming • Gregory McNamee • Alberto Carosa • Guido Vignelli • Chilton Williamson, Jr.

"Can immigration be expected to change America for better, or for worse? If we accept at face value President George W. Bush's claim that terrorism represents the gravest threat to America, as indeed it may, then we must ask ourselves whether terrorism, by itself, is capable either of obliterating the United States as—say—Rome eradicated Carthage from the map of North Africa, or of destroying it by effectively replacing the existing nation on what historically has been American soil with another and different nation. If the answer is "No," then we must agree that the terrorist threat is in fact a subset of the immigration one—and that **mass immigration is a greater threat to the survival of our country than any terrorist campaign possibly could be**. Which, it seems to me, is saying a very great deal about the dangers posed to the United States by mass immigration."

—From the Foreword, by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Softcover • 307 pages
$29.95 (includes s/h)

To order, call (800) 383-0680
or visit *www.ChroniclesMagazine.org*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Freedom From Religion

THE RECENT "FLAP" over the Ground Zero Mosque is the meaningless debate we have come to expect from American political debates, which are a mere exchange of platitudes. The only interesting part is the common ground occupied by both sides. The left says that the First Amendment and the universal human right to enjoy religious liberty mean that no one can or should interfere in the construction of a mosque-*cum*-Islamic-propaganda center only two blocks away from the Twin Towers. The right, by contrast, while agreeing that the Constitution guarantees the religious liberties of every religion whatsoever, demur at the bad taste in the selection of this of all possible sites. Sarah Palin among others went so far as to compare the building of a mosque in Manhattan with "building a Serbian Orthodox church at the Srebrenica killing fields where Muslims were slaughtered."

Conservatives and liberals agree: Muslims have an inalienable constitutional right to come to the United States, acquire citizenship, and practice a religion that for 1,300 years has justified the oppression, persecution, rape, and murder of Christians. If the Constitution really did guarantee freedom of religion to Muslims, it would be tempting to agree with the Abolitionists that it is a pact with the Devil.

In fact, the Constitution does not guarantee religious liberty. The First Amendment simply forbids the federal government from interfering in whatever religion was being practiced in the states. Even the 14th Amendment, which was never legitimately passed, says nothing about freedom of religion, which was not guaranteed by the Constitution but invented by judges.

Some conservatives may concede the constitutional point, but only to invoke the inalienable rights proclaimed in the Declaration and, in the course of the conversation, ring the changes on the blessings of religious tolerance. "After all, we don't want to return to the bad old days when Catholics and Protestants killed each other in the name of religion." Before long we shall end up at the Spanish Inquisition.

"I didn't expect the Spanish Inquisition!"

"Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition!"

Actually, Michael Palin (as Cardinal Ximénez) was quite wrong: We always expect the Spanish Inquisition to turn up in any discussion of religious liberty.

A fairly decent case can be made in defense of the Inquisition, but the merits or demerits of the Church's crackdown on heresy and bad faith have no bearing on this subject. There is a great deal of room between clerical absolutism and libertarian absolutism, between a state-supported Inquisition and a state-protected right to worship any god whatsoever, whether Thor, Allah, or the great voodoo god Babalu. Religious tolerance is a matter of prudence, of setting reasonable limits. The Roman Empire was almost but not quite infinitely tolerant of religious diversity, but it did restrict certain dangerous or disgusting practices, such as witchcraft or self-mutilation, and banned both Druidism and Christianity as subversive political cults. It would be perfectly possible to tolerate all mainstream forms of Christianity while either outlawing or discriminating against Muslims, Moonies, and—outside of Utah—Mormons. It is a question not of any absolute right but of what we are willing to tolerate.

The inevitable *reductio ad absurdum* of religious liberty was reached in Oklahoma City, where a group of Satanists have been able to rent space in the Civic Center in order to stage an anti-Christian blasphemy. Why should the Christian majority of Oklahoma taxpayers permit this obscenity? Because America was founded on the principle of freedom of religion, and it would even be unchristian to restrict the worship of the enemy of the human race.

Whatever lies they may tell in President Obama's United Church of C----t, freedom of religion has never been a teaching of Christianity. When Christians were being persecuted by Rome, they did not demand their rights: They bore witness to the truth. Once in the saddle, they quickly began the crackdown on paganism, which they regarded (a bit unfairly in my opinion) as devil worship. There are only two generations between Constantine's decision to tolerate his new religion and Theodosius' decree outlawing other religions. Most historians would probably say that the desire for religious freedom sprang up in response to the wars between Catholics and Protestants in the 16th and 17th centuries. That is certainly the argument made by Montaigne and Voltaire, but there is no reason to take either of these men at their word. Both hated Christianity in every form and used any weapon they could find against the Catholic Church.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary* is peppered with aspersions on Christian intolerance. His irrational and dishonest fulminations culminate in his article on toleration, in which he derides Christians who are too stupid to follow the example of "the lettered Chinese, the Persees, and all wise men." Christian bigots are "monsters, to whom superstition is as necessary as carrion to crows." He concludes with an appeal to polytheism and multiculturalism:

> Whilst you have but two religions among you, they will be ever at daggers drawing; if you have thirty they will live quietly. Turn your eyes to the grand signior [the Ottoman sultan]; he has among his subjects Guebers, Banians, Greeks, Latins, Christians, and Nestorians. Whoever goes about to raise any disturbance is surely impaled; and thus all live in peace and quietness.

The "peace and quietness" of the Ottoman Empire is a myth or, rather, a lie. Sultans could only occasionally repress insurrection, civil war, and brigandage, but what peace their subjects enjoyed was bought at the price of oppression and persecution. From the Conquest of Constantinople to the Armenian genocide and the massacres at Smyrna, Turkish history has been a bloody nightmare for Christians and Jews. An attentive student will hear Voltaire's lying sentiments clanking like a cheap beer can through the empty corridors of the liberal mind up and down the centuries: The Christian West is a place of bigotry; we must emulate the wise and humane cannibals (Montaigne), Persians (Montesquieu), or Chinese, Japanese, Africans, Indians, or whatever exotic religious ethnicity—Guebers and Banians?—our educationists can look up on Wikipedia.

This anti-Christian call for religious liberty is more than a harmless self-delusion of Enlightenment philosophes. The Enlightenment's gooey rubber hit the political road in 1789, when the first government of the French Revolution passed the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Article 10 declares, "No one shall be disquieted (*inquiété*) on account of his opinions, including his religious views, provided their manifestation does not disturb the public order established by law." In the revision of 1793, the conclusion to Article 7 goes a bit further: "the free pursuit of religion cannot be forbidden." Liberal-sounding words. The reality was the appropriation of the Church's property, the establishment of a new cult on the ruins of an historic religion, the mass rape of nuns, and the indiscriminate slaughter of the religious of both sexes. Freedom of religion is a code word for the destruction of Christianity.

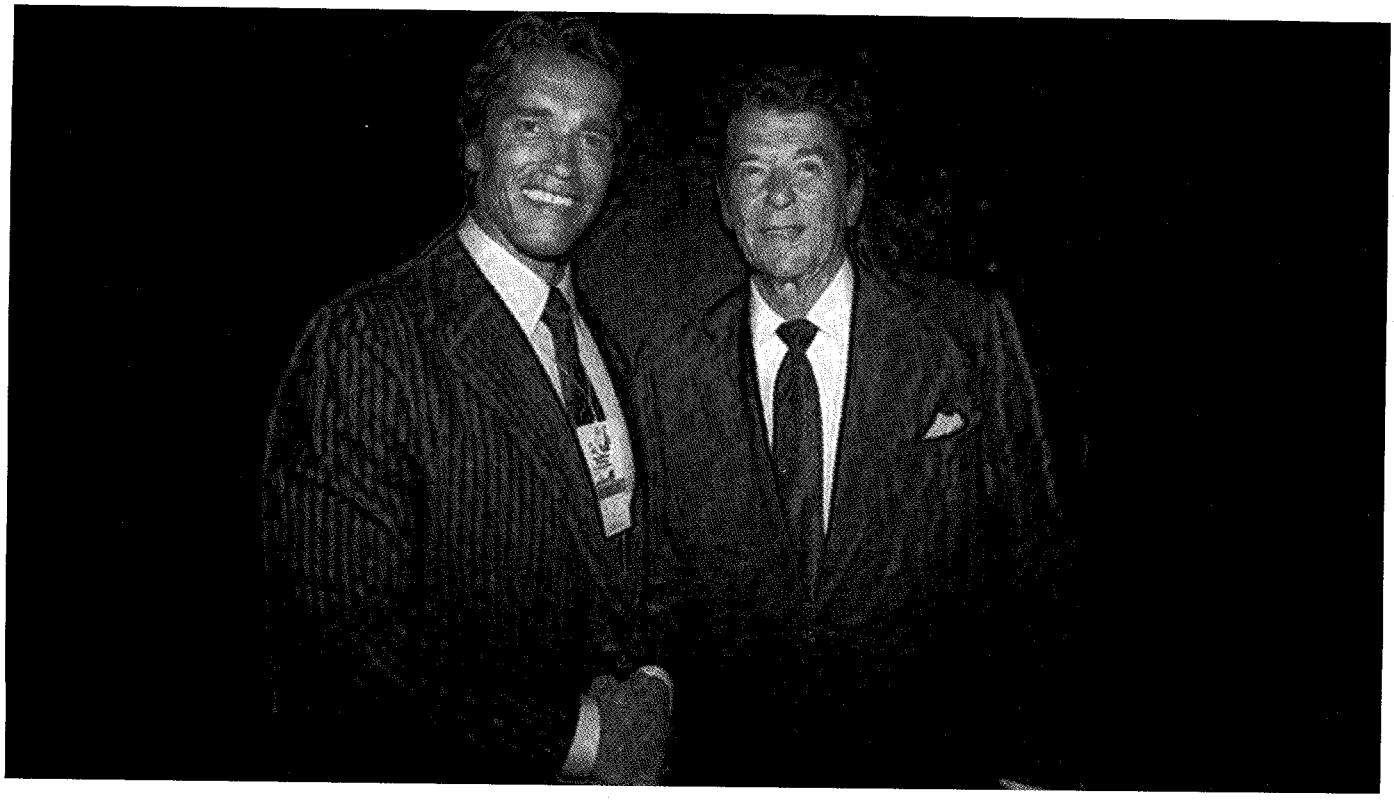
Religious liberty is not a natural right: It is a gift of a society or commonwealth. This is partly because religion is not faith—what one personally believes (or feels)—but an organized public action. Thus, the public or the republic has the right and duty to protect itself from alien or malignant cults. In a diverse Christian society, naturally, the various churches have had to learn to tolerate one another, though in practice toleration is more often a sign of indifference. Church has become that thing you do or do not do on one day a week. It is like the beautiful jewel you take out of the box every once in a while to admire and feel good about yourself for owning. But religion is really more like a wedding ring, a visible symbol of an enduring commitment.

THE PAINFUL TRUTH is that serious Catholics and serious Calvinists cannot easily live together in the same commonwealth without sacrificing a good deal of their religion (though not their faith). Coexistence is easiest in a country like Switzerland, where the cantons and communes were dominated by one or the other church. With greater diversity come greater strains. Christians can coexist with Jews on a basis of toleration, that is, whichever religion is in the majority can agree to put up with the other so long as the minority behave themselves. In Israel, Christians are very much second-class citizens, whose religious rites are restricted and whose civil rights are inferior to the Jewish citizens of the Jewish state. Since Israel is now their country, it is not my place to object, though it is a little tedious when American Jews complain about discrimination.

Here in America the Protestant majority learned to tolerate first Catholics and then Jews. But do we really have to tolerate Satanists who love evil and worship the Enemy, or even Muslims? The idea of Christians according religious freedom to Muslims who define themselves in part by their hatred of Christianity, and who have oppressed Christians whenever they have had the power to do so, is preposterous. It is worse than preposterous, because the point of the exercise is not to liberate Muslims but to enslave Christians.

If we can learn nothing else from the revolutionary history of the past five centuries we can at least learn this little thing, that all those universal human rights we hear so much about were the invention of anti-Christian philosophers whose ultimate goal was always the same: *Écrasez l'infâme*, as Voltaire used to sign his letters, *Écrasez le consubstantiel*. Exterminate the infamous God Who became man. Liberal Christians who spout the slogans of religious freedom are active collaborators in the campaign to destroy Christianity, and conservative Christians who follow their lead are at best useful idiots. ◆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Celebrity Politicians, Savvy Sergeants

by Roger D. McGrath

"We need another Reagan."

I've heard that too many times to count. Don't get me wrong: I think another Reagan would be a good start—but only a start. Everyone should recall that Reagan, even during the six years that the Republicans held the Senate, was able to do little to trim back the size of the federal leviathan, let alone abolish programs that had been around only since the days of LBJ and Nixon (not to mention the Department of Education, signed into existence by Jimmy Carter a little more than a year before Reagan's election).

Take a look at Reagan's speech at the Republican National Convention in 1964. The entire speech is on YouTube. Reagan is brilliant. The speech is brilliant. Two years later he was elected governor of California. If only he had become president back then, when he still had all his mental faculties and acuity. Nonetheless, without the troops in the trenches, I'm not sure what he could have done. Great leaders and great leadership can inspire and rally, organize and direct—but without a strong base, not much will happen.

For most of our history we've had presidents who were anything but celebrities, and the country did just fine. The American culture of enterprise, individualism, hard work, family, religion, and racial homogeneity were firmly in place and kept America humming along. Presidents came and went. It mattered little. Few people can name such 19th-century presidents as Martin Van Buren, William Henry Harrison, James K. Polk, Zachary Taylor, Franklin Pierce, James Buchanan, Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, or Benjamin Harrison. Benjamin Harrison! Can anyone tell me anything about Benjamin Harrison or his presidency?

Even the 20th century has presidential figures who have fallen into obscurity. Most college students I encountered during more than 30 years of teaching, including 15 years at UCLA, could tell me next to nothing about William Howard Taft, Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, or Herbert Hoover.

This isn't necessarily bad. It means that America has al-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ways been far more, and far greater than, her presidents. This remains true, despite the electronic media helping to make the president a celebrity and exaggerating his importance. Look at what the media has done with Barack Obama—or, should I say, St. Obama the Messiah. He is truly a celebrity, and his fans are legion. As his term in office approaches the halfway point, though, even his admirers are beginning to find him wanting. Although he has had Democratic majorities in both the House and the Senate, his presidency is falling far short of the expectations those on the left had when he swept into office. The crowds of sheeplike people, some with tears running down their cheeks, fawning over him during campaign rallies, almost guaranteed that he would become a bitter disappointment. Those fans thought that he was going to save them—from everything, including themselves.

IT EMBARRASSES ME that America has come to this, and I would be equally embarrassed and alarmed if the figure fawned over was on the right. We Americans are better than that, bigger than that, more independent than that, and more ornery than that. My wife's paternal grandfather said he immigrated to America because he would neither step aside for, nor tip his hat to, any man. Are we now a people yearning and waiting for a celebrity politician to rescue us lowly peasants?

When I was growing up, one reason I was especially proud to be an American was exactly because Americans had an independent, ornery, rebellious, even defiant spirit. For me there is nothing like it. Remember when President Jimmy Carter decided we should go metric? Well, I had nothing against science simplifying calculations and using the metric system. But why mess with road signs? However, that is just what Carter did—despite his posturing as the down-home Georgia peanut farmer—because he was a liberal elitist who knew exactly what was best for the rest of us.

Large green signs began to dot our interstate highways with distance in kilometers. It infuriated me—and evidently infuriated others. Within days the signs were shot full of holes. I loved it. The signs were replaced. The new signs were shot full of holes. I loved it. The signs were again replaced, but this time with signs using good, old fashioned miles. No one shot them full of holes. No one felt the need to shoot them full of holes. The signs with kilometers, though—well, God bless the boys who squeezed off those rounds. Every bullet hole said, "I'm an American. F-ck you."

This is all part of our tradition. Stepping aside for or tipping our hat to our putative betters is foreign to us. "There is nothing in America," a European visitor to the frontier said, "that strikes a foreigner so much as the real republican equality existing in the Western States, which border on the wilderness." The mountain men, sourdoughs, cowboys, teamsters, and others judged men on their individual merits, not on titles, lineage, or wealth. As a cowboy told a supercilious scion of British nobility, "You may be a son of a lord back in England, but that ain't what you are out here." When another British nobleman insisted on being addressed as "Esquire," the cowboys laughed and said that they would be calling him "Charlie."

Are we now a people yearning and waiting for a celebrity politician to rescue us lowly peasants?

"Superiority," noted an English traveler, "is yielded to men of acknowledged talent alone." A titled Englishman traveling through the cattle country of the northern High Plains brought a bathtub with him. When the Englishman ordered a hired packer to fill it, the frontiersman instead drew a revolver and shot the tub full of holes, telling the nobleman that he now had a shower. When an aristocratic visitor asked a Wyoming cowboy if his "master" was at home, the drover replied angrily, "the son of Beliel ain't been born yet."

For years I taught a college course on World War II. I delivered several lectures on the background of the war and, for the Pacific Theater, described in detail the Japanese army and navy, and Japan's war in China long before America became involved. By the time I got to the battle for Guadalcanal, the students knew the Japanese forces and their arms well. Most of the Japanese who served on Guadalcanal were veterans of other campaigns and were all well trained and disciplined. Moreover, at that point their equipment and arms were equal to and occasionally superior to ours. Their Zero, for example, was clearly superior to the Wildcat fighter that the Marines flew. The Marine slogging his way through the jungle carried the old bolt-action 1903 Springfield rifle. The M1 Garand would not be seen on Guadalcanal until the Army arrived.

This all led students to wonder how in the world the Marines could have prevailed. The odds against them seemed enormous. I've read plenty on Guadalcanal and have talked with veterans of the campaign, including two of my cousins.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It is clear that the individual Marine pilot and rifleman beat the veteran Japanese at their own game because that Marine was independent, ornery, rebellious, and even defiant. When the Japanese lost officers, they collapsed. They did nothing but charge in a mindless *banzai* fashion or commit suicide. This was celebrity politics on the battlefield. Their system required absolute submission and obedience to their officers and worship of the emperor.

Americans are best in a crisis. In fact, it usually takes a crisis for Americans to react. The Tea Parties are a reaction to an America at the crossroads. Moreover, the Tea Parties are clearly a grassroots phenomenon. These protesting Americans are not waiting for a politician to lead them.

While good leadership was critical to the Marines, that leadership was supplied not only by senior officers but by junior officers and NCOs as well. Some companies lost all their officers and were commanded by sergeants—effectively so. When Lt. Col. Chesty Puller contacted one of his companies that had been hit especially hard, a corporal came on the line. Puller asked him the condition of the company. "We have nothing better than sergeants left, sir," said the corporal.

Puller growled into the line, "There is nothing better in the Marine Corps than sergeants."

This was demonstrated again and again on Guadalcanal. A diary taken from the body of a dead Japanese major had this to say: "The Americans amaze me. I never violate the principles of warfare, and they never obey them." He couldn't understand how the Japanese were losing.

The Japanese command had to invent stories to justify their losses. Said one communiqué to Japan, "The Americans on this island are not ordinary troops, but Marines, a special force recruited from jails and insane asylums for blood lust."

Japanese officers treated their men as inferiors and subjected them to brutal discipline. American officers hoped to earn the respect of their troops by never asking them to do anything they themselves wouldn't do. On occasion, American officers even indulged their troops. Also taken from the Japanese major whose diary proved so revealing was his sword, a beautiful piece. The sword was put on display at Puller's command post. It stayed there only a short while before it disappeared. One of Puller's aides was indignant, exclaiming to Puller, "We'll have a shakedown. We'll turn it up in one of the bedrolls, Colonel."

"Hell, no!" replied Puller. "I don't know who got it, but any one of those boys rates it more than I do. They carried the big load. Let him keep it."

Leaders in Washington could lose faith, but not the boys on the ground. A radio broadcast picked up on Guadalcanal in the early weeks of the campaign was listened to with rapt attention. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox was being interviewed. He seemed pessimistic about Guadalcanal and feared it could become another Bataan. With Puller and other senior officers, as well as assorted enlisted men, standing around the radio, a young Marine shouted, "How about that old bastard? Don't he know we got real Marines on this island?"

Later in the campaign the Army arrived to reinforce the Marines. Chesty Puller's battalion was holding part of the perimeter at Henderson Field. Puller had his boys string barbed wire in front of their positions and dig in deep, knowing that the Japanese were about to launch a major attack. An Army colonel soon arrived, telling Puller that his unit was on its way to help with the perimeter defense. Puller told the Army colonel, "I want you to make it clear to your people that my men, even if they're only sergeants, will command in those holes when your officers and men arrive."

The Army colonel without hesitation replied, "I understand you. Let's go." Can you imagine that occurring in the armed forces of any other nation?

Later, when the Japanese assault had been shredded and thousands of Japanese killed or wounded, a wounded Japanese officer was brought in alive. Through a translator Puller asked him, "Why didn't you change your tactics when you saw you weren't breaking our line? Why didn't you shift to a weaker spot?"

"That is not the Japanese way," said the officer. "The plan had been made. No one would have dared to change it. It must go as it is written."

Puller's junior officers and NCOs changed tactics and improvised on the spot. Many times it was sergeants mak-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing the decisions. The campaign cost Puller 24 percent of his enlisted men but 37 percent of his officers. Much of the credit for the perimeter defense of Henderson Field goes to three of Puller's gunnery sergeants—Roy Fowle, Joe Buckley, and Red O'Neill—to say nothing of the individual heroics of such three-stripe sergeants as John Basilone.

After the Guadalcanal campaign, Puller was brought back to the states and made available for speaking engagements and interviews. Government officials thought that it would be good for home-front morale to have one of the key figures in the campaign describe how we defeated the heretofore invincible Japanese. Those officials got more than they bargained for from the salty and outspoken Chesty Puller and soon pulled him off the speaking and interview circuit. In speech after speech Puller emphasized that the individual American fighting man had made the difference. Said Puller, "I can't tell you the Japs are no damned good because they are good. But we're better. One American properly trained can handle two of the yellow bastards. They have discipline, and they use the jungle cover better than we do, but they can't think on their own. They never change battle plans once they're made, regardless of cost."

What American history tells me and what I've learned from my own observations confirms the wisdom of our frontier forefathers and the experience of the Marines on the Canal. We need good leaders, to be sure, and a telegenic and media-savvy presidential candidate with solid conservative credentials would be welcome. However, our base is far more important. If we create a strong base through grassroots efforts, then the rest will take care of itself. I saw California and the nation go ape over Arnold Schwarzenegger, the ultimate celebrity politician, when he ran for and won the governorship. There was even mention of amending the Constitution so a naturalized citizen—meaning Schwarzenegger—could become president. Republicans were in a frenzy. How silly that all seems now. I suspect the Democratic frenzy over Obama will soon seem equally silly to those who put their faith in him.

As Americans, we shouldn't put our faith in media princes—or princes of any kind. No one is going to save us. No one is going to rescue us. We have to do it ourselves. I think that is what we are seeing in the Tea Parties. Nations and cultures are built from the ground up, beginning with the family. If we start with our own families, if we bring children into the world and inculcate them with our values, traditions, spirit, and sense of identity, then we shall not fear for the future.

At the Rockford Institute Summer School in 2009, one of those in attendance asked me what we can do to save our civilization. I told him all the usual things—things that are essential—but I didn't think to mention that he had already contributed mightily to the cause. He was there with his wife and children. His children—young adults, really—were clearly steeped in our values, well educated, and highly accomplished. If we produce children like that, our future is secure. If we don't, and we've certainly been falling down on the job lately, then no matter how many Reagans we have at the top, we will lose our country.

While good leadership was critical to the Marines, that leadership was supplied not only by senior officers but by junior officers and NCOs as well. Some companies lost all their officers and were commanded by sergeants—effectively so.

I'm not entirely pessimistic. I think Americans are best in a crisis. In fact, it usually takes a crisis for Americans to react. The Tea Parties are a reaction to an America at the crossroads. Moreover, the Tea Parties are clearly a grassroots phenomenon. These protesting Americans are not waiting for a politician to lead them. The phenomenon reminds me of those bullet holes in the highway signs. It remains to be seen if a politician will try to jump out in front of the Tea Party march as it gains momentum. I would not be displeased if such a politician got run over.

Let's remember that, in America, power emanates from the people—not from princes.

Corresponding editor Roger D. McGrath is the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes. *He has appeared in numerous television documentaries and series, including* Tales of the Gun, Biography, Mail Call, Forgotten Wars, Conquerors, Presidents, The Real West, Wild West Tech, *and* Outlaws & Lawmen. *He also appears in special features on DVDs, most recently on* 3:10 to Yuma *(2007).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

©iStockphoto.com/GP232

Reaganism and the External Threat

by Wayne Allensworth

"THERE'S A BEAR in the woods," warns ad man Hal Riney, as a grizzly appears on screen. "For some people, the bear is easy to see. Others don't see it at all. Some people say the bear is tame. Others say it is vicious and dangerous. Since no one can really be sure who's right, isn't it smart to be as strong as the bear? If there is a bear."

In the last scene, a man appears, and the bear steps back. Cut to a picture of Ronald Reagan: "President Reagan, prepared for peace."

The highly effective "bear ad" ran as part of President Reagan's 1984 reelection campaign, one that included ads featuring the memorable tag lines "It's morning again in America" and "America's back!" The ads were optimistic, did not "go negative" in political-attack mode, and complimented Reagan's avuncular pitchman persona.

The bear ad was softer than the President's anti-Soviet rhetoric, taking some edge off the image of a man who had called the Soviet Union an "evil empire" and, in a sound test caught by a live microphone, said he would "outlaw Russia." ("My fellow Americans. I'm pleased to announce that I've signed legislation that will outlaw Russia forever. We begin bombing in five minutes.") The impression left on most viewers was that of a "peace through strength" policy. It undercut the attempts of Reagan's opponents to portray him as dangerously aggressive, but remained in keeping with something basic about Reaganism: its focus on the external enemy.

In less skillful style, the bear ad was revamped for George W. Bush's campaign in 2004, recasting the external enemy (unidentified terrorists) as a wolf pack. The Bush ad concluded with this line: "And weakness attracts those who are waiting to do America harm." The ad was markedly less subtle and more somber in tone. Still, there was no denying that Reaganism's fundamental optimism and all's-well-with-America attitude remained at the heart of the Republican Party. Recall President Bush, in the wake of the September 11 attacks, calling on Americans to show the enemy what we are all about—go about your business,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

go shopping. The threat was external. And George W. Bush was in positive-spin mode when he characterized Islam as a "religion of peace."

His words were a distant echo of Reagan's, who, when his anti-Soviet blinders were in operation, praised the "Afghan freedom fighters" in a style that was long on expediency and short on any sober assessment of who the "freedom fighters" were. "Every country and every people," said President Reagan, "has a stake in the Afghan resistance, for the freedom fighters of Afghanistan are defending principles of independence and freedom that form the basis of global security and stability."

The American lack of historical perspective would evolve into an anti-intellectualism on the right personified by "W" himself. Under George W. Bush, the universal optimism of Reaganism was put to work in the Herculean task of ridding the world of evil, a task that assumed America herself was not only sound and healthy but fit for a messianic undertaking that, in scope, was not unlike the Soviet mission of spreading communism or Islam's mission of expanding the realm of the prophet.

THE "MORNING AGAIN IN AMERICA" rhetoric would not have worked in the 1980's were it not for a sense that the terrible 60's were over, that the kids were all right if a bit rebellious (aren't all young people like that?), and that business still operated on an assumption that what's good for General Motors is good for America and *vice versa*. America was back, strong and healthy. The enemy was that bear prowling in the woods. "Liberals" were well meaning but naive. And the American Dream was assumed to be universal. This mundane optimism has as its basis a very unconservative notion, that all people are basically good. Those who embraced it were not far from a belief in America as the "universal nation" and a "conservatism" that had no notion of American identity beyond a "creed" that could be summed up in sound bites.

An America that was sound and healthy could afford to entertain loose talk about "revolution" and universal equality. Here is President Reagan at Moscow State University in 1988: "Freedom is the right to question and change the established way of doing things. It is the continuous revolution of the marketplace." And here is Reagan on America as a universal nation: "America stands unique in the world: the only country not founded on race but on a way, an ideal. Not in spite of, but because of our polyglot background, we have had all the strength in the world. That is the American way." It was a short step from this to "diversity is our strength." There is no sense in these words of the American people as an historical nation. Without that notion, foreign policy becomes a matter of mission, not national interests.

And what of the bear? Like generals fighting the last war, and with anticommunism as the glue holding together mainstream conservatism, the conservatives of the Reagan era made anticommunism the chief test for membership in the movement. In retrospect, no serious, sustained attempts at rolling back liberalism were made. The Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday, signed into law by President Reagan, placed the country's mythic origins in those awful 1960's conservatives were supposed to hate. And the President (who, to his credit, later said he regretted this) signed an amnesty for millions of illegal aliens, setting the stage for future attempts to amnesty ever-growing numbers of aliens in our midst. The "bear" was the real enemy, something mainstream conservatives could define ourselves against. For many whites, militaristic patriotism became an outlet for expressing ourselves as a people, so long as we focused on the "bear" and not the wolves who were already inside the gates.

How great a threat was the Soviet Union in the Reagan era? By 1980, the Soviet Union was ruled by a corrupt and vulnerable gerontocracy; the bear was a doddering and senile beast not long for this world. Admittedly, to the casual observer, this did not seem to be the case. But the writing was on the wall for those who had eyes to see it. (I was not one of them, being a young man inspired partly by Reaganism's stand against the Soviet bear to join the Cold Warriors even as the Cold War was petering out.) By the mid-70's, the Brezhnev regime had established a comfortable accord with various Soviet leadership factions; the aging leaders lived well, while corruption mushroomed in a post-Stalinist bureaucracy. The military got what it wanted from the budget. Russian nationalism helped prop up the regime, while Moscow became financially dependent on oil sales and hard-currency income.

Soviet expansion continued, fueled by Western colonial withdrawal and anti-Western nationalism, signaling Moscow's "imperial overstretch." The Soviets became dependent on food imports. Internal controls were relaxed, and dissident movements sprang up across the Soviet bloc. The regime was running out of steam and taxing itself on expansion and maintaining the Warsaw Pact, even as the command economy failed to deliver. The Soviet army was stuck in the Afghanistan quagmire (made worse, to be sure, by U.S. support for the Afghan "freedom fighters"). Soviet society was showing signs of social pathologies, including rampant alcoholism. The complacent Soviet leadership simply chose to ignore the decay from within.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

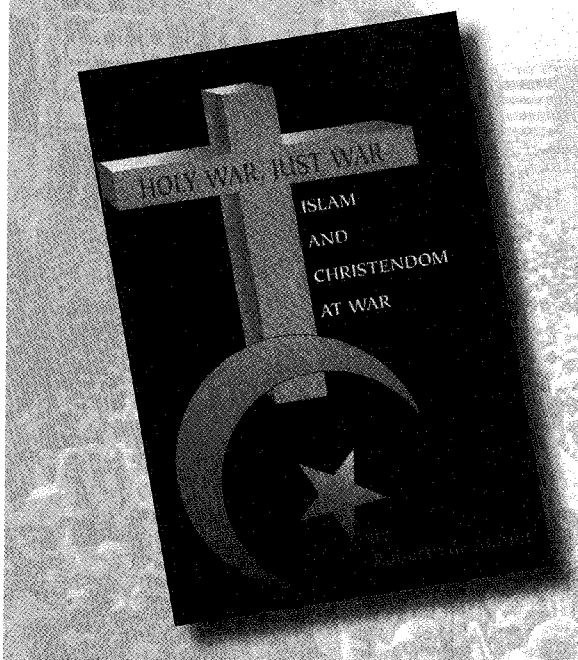
Cold War lore has it that, in order to hurt Moscow's budget, Washington encouraged the Saudis to stop supporting oil prices as their oil production rose. Regardless of the precipitating causes, when the Saudis announced a policy shift in 1985, the Soviets were faced with tough choices: End subsidies to the Warsaw Pact, cut military production, or reduce food imports. The leadership decided, instead, to kick the can down the road by massive borrowing. By the late 80's, with debts piling up, Mikhail Gorbachev was ready to negotiate the terms of surrendering the Eastern Bloc in exchange for Western credits. (This period is ably described in Yegor Gaidar's 2006 book *Gibel' Imperii: Uroki dlya sovremennoi Rossii*, or *The Collapse of an Empire: Lessons for Modern Russia.*) President Reagan, much to the chagrin of some hard-line Cold Warriors, wisely decided that Gorbachev was someone with whom the United States could deal.

The Cold War ended, and Ronald Reagan deserves credit for managing the conclusion of that confrontation. Whether his global approach and his "Star Wars" program actually played the decisive role in the Soviet surrender, and whether the focus on the Soviet threat should have been the key policy of Reagan-era conservatism, are debatable. That Reaganism's preoccupation with, and expenditure of enormous amounts of time, money, and energy on, the external enemy distracted conservatives from the decay within America is indisputable. Along the way, the neoconservatives took the reins of mainstream conservatism, a coup made easier by the revolutionary and egalitarian rhetoric employed by Reagan himself, language David Priestland, in *The Red Flag: A History of Communism*, described as "Marxist inflected," reflecting "revolutionary idealism"—the antithesis of anything that can rightly be called conservative.

Now as then, the crisis faced by the United States is social, demographic, spiritual, and economic, and mainstream conservatives are intellectually ill equipped to pose the right questions and focus on the real and present dangers to the nation. A retreat to Reaganism, with its sunny optimism, revolutionary and egalitarian rhetoric, and focus on external threats, is not the way to join the present battle. The time of a Reaganist conservatism had already passed in 1980, and Reaganism will likely prove impotent against the threats our country faces today. As the late Samuel Francis once wrote, while movement conservatives were celebrating "morning in America," it was really the 11th hour.

Corresponding Editor Wayne Allensworth is the author of The Russian Question.

FROM CHRONICLES PRESS



Holy War, Just War

Islam and Christendom at War

by Roberto de Mattei

"The term 'clash of civilizations' is not a palatable one in political and media circles," writes Roberto de Mattei, but it is the only proper framework for understanding how the fundamental theological differences between Christianity and Islam inform the way their adherents wage war. In this important work, he explains these differences with careful scholarship and defends with eloquence the "lawfulness of war against an enemy who is attacking the West, with the aim of establishing a moral and social order that is radically opposed to our history and tradition."

Softcover • 90 pages • $15.95
includes shipping and handling
Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

• send check or money order to 928 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103
• make checks payable to The Rockford Institute
• call 800-383-0680 to order with MasterCard, Visa, Amex, Discover
• purchase online at the webstore on *ChroniclesMagazine.org*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

North Light

by David Mason

Lulu hogs my reading chair,
so I lift her carefully
with small, mollifying words,
and place her paws on the floor.
My turn to sit lazily
with nothing to move towards.

In what was a studio,
north light falls across my desk,
littered with work I'll turn to
soon enough. Not now. Not now
when my office seems to bask
in bright clouds filling the view.

My dusty library lies
ready to be thumbed and read.
Outside, Siberian elms
fan their leaves against the sky's
dream procession, a cloud head
with some spirit at the helm.

All day I've been rudderless—
a man waking from a nap
to a world still nodding off,
persistent and purposeless
as the cat kneading my lap,
a mini-god seeking proof.

The light of the passing world,
brief heaves of animal breath
expanding and falling still—
I stroke the fur lying curled
on my lap and watch the wreath
of leaves windblown from my sill,

acknowledging for this day
nothing comes right in a poem
or a book, nothing resolves
in a flourishing display,
but at least I am at home
where light in the north evolves.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Watershed for the Left

by William J. Watkins, Jr.

During the week of December 6, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals will hear arguments in *Perry* v. *Schwarzenegger*. In the original decision, U.S. District Judge Vaughn R. Walker held that California's Proposition 8, which amended the state constitution to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman, violated the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In essence, Judge Walker ruled that there is no rational reason to limit marriage to opposite-sex couples. He redefined marriage as "a couple's choice to live with each other, to remain committed to one another and to form a household based on their own feelings about one another and to join in an economic partnership and support one another and any dependents [*sic*]."

Considering that the Ninth Circuit is the most liberal appellate court in the country, Judge Walker's decision will likely be upheld. Whatever the result, the losing side is certain to petition the Supreme Court for *certiorari*. Although the Supreme Court is not required to grant review, it's doubtful that the Court's more liberal members will pass on an opportunity to engage in social experimentation. Judge Walker's new definition of marriage might become *de rigueur* in all 50 states.

The *Perry* opinion is a reflection of the modern judicial mind. To give himself cover, Judge Walker conducted a trial and heard testimony about Proposition 8. Fact-finding by a trial judge is subject to great deference on appeal, and hence, Judge Walker's opinion is replete with quotations from testifying witnesses. For example, gay and lesbian couples testified that traditional marriage denies them "access to the language" to describe their unions. One man explained that it was awkward to go into a bank and say, "My partner and I want to open a joint account." How much the better, the man contended, if he could refer to his partner as "my husband."

Judge Walker also heard from various expert witnesses. Psychologist Gregory Herek, whose blog is entitled *Beyond Homophobia*, testified that "homosexuality is a normal expression of human sexuality." Ilan Meyer, a social epidemiologist, opined that Proposition 8 "increases the likelihood of negative mental and physical health outcomes for gays and lesbians." Judge Walker heard from Gary Segura, a Stanford professor of political science and chair of Chicana/o Studies at the Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity, who "identified religion as the chief obstacle to gay and lesbian political advances." Economists took the stand to report that the state has lost money "because Proposition 8 slashed the number of weddings performed in San Francisco."

Because Governor Terminator and Attorney General Moonbeam refused to defend the people's amendment to the state constitution, this task fell to private groups that intervened in the litigation. These groups faced an uphill battle, because many of the experts they sought to call did not want to appear in court for personal-safety reasons. For the brave individuals who did testify, Judge Walker simply rejected their opinions as "unreliable" and "entitled to little weight."

After taking testimony, Judge Walker moved to the legal issue: Does the 14th Amendment prohibit states from limiting marriage to a union between a man and a woman? Judge Walker purportedly subjected Proposition 8 to rational-basis review. To pass this test, a state law need only be "rationally related" to a "legitimate government interest." Under Supreme Court case law, so long as there is any reasonably conceivable state of facts that could provide a rational basis for the classification, the law must be upheld.

The most obvious legitimate government interest is the preservation of public morals. Under the Tenth Amendment, the states retain broad authority known as the "police power." Absent a state constitutional provision restraining this power, the states and localities may pass laws and regulations to promote the comfort, safety, morals, and health of the people. State laws prohibiting such matters as gambling, polygamy, prostitution, and public drunkenness are enacted pursuant to the police power. A ballot initiative limiting marriage to heterosexual couples should fall squarely within the ambit of the police power and be upheld.

Before 2003, this would have been true. In that year, a 6-3 majority of the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated a Texas statute criminalizing homosexual sodomy. The decision in *Lawrence* v. *Texas*, authored by Justice Anthony Kennedy, held that Judeo-Christian "ethical and moral principles" may not form the basis of state legislation. The fact that a majority of citizens has "traditionally viewed a particular practice as immoral is not a sufficient reason for uphold-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing a law prohibiting the practice." All persons, according to Justice Kennedy, may define their own concepts "of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life," without regard to contrary views firmly established and ingrained in American experience.

Justice Kennedy further opined that "[p]ersons in a homosexual relationship may seek autonomy for [marriage, contraception, family relationships, childrearing, *etc.*] just as heterosexual persons do." In other words, Justice Kennedy signaled that the courts should reexamine traditional notions about marriage and strike down state laws based on ancient moral codes.

In light of *Lawrence*, Judge Walker demanded that the defenders of Proposition 8 define a secular purpose furthered by the traditional definition of marriage. They responded that Proposition 8 promotes "naturally procreative sexual relationships and channel[s] them into stable, enduring unions for the sake of producing and raising the next generation." Californians could also rationally deduce that a family structure with married (opposite-sex) parents is the best social environment in which to bear children. Californians could further conclude that the rearing of children by same-sex couples—prohibited by nature from being the biological parents of a child—cannot furnish children with a parental authority figure of each sex. At a minimum, such purposes appear rational and lack a moral component declared impermissible by *Lawrence*.

Judge Walker, however, still found fault with the possible secular purposes of Proposition 8. "Children," he lectured, "do not need to be raised by a male parent and a female parent to be well-adjusted, and having both a male and a female parent does not increase the likelihood that a child will be well-adjusted." Judge Walker further determined that sex roles in marriage are an unnatural concoction of the state's previous efforts to perpetuate a patriarchal society. Now, in our more enlightened age, we know that "the exclusion [of same-sex couples from marriage] exists as an artifact of a time when the genders were seen as having distinct roles in society and marriage. That time has passed." He therefore pronounced that "[g]ender no longer forms an essential part of marriage." Men and women are much like pennies, fungible units having identical roles and functions.

Where have the common people been misled to believe that sex (not "gender") is relevant to marriage? Christ's Church, of course. It is irrational to teach that homosexuality is sinful, says Judge Walker, and therefore Christianity directly harms homosexuals. Orthodox Christian beliefs are the fountainhead of "stereotypes and misinformation" that have "resulted in social and legal disadvantages for gays and lesbians." Perhaps sensing a Christian conspiracy, Judge Walker noted that "84 percent of people who attend church weekly voted in favor of Proposition 8."

Judge Walker's reasoning leaves open many other possibilities for "marriage." His definition refers to "couples," but why should marriage be limited to two people? *Perry* teaches that marriage is only a matter of affections. If polygamists want "access to the language," how can a state use its police power to stop them from getting married? Because there is nothing magical about "gender," one can hardly argue that there is anything special about the number two. (Apologies to the late Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell.)

Similarly, why should consanguinity pose an obstacle to a father and daughter who desire to marry? If they believe a marital union is the mechanism for their self-actualization, then how can they be denied a marriage license? Dad and daughter must define for themselves the concepts "of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life." One cannot fall back on biblical prohibitions against these relationships, since the Bible, according to *Lawrence*, may not be used to support a statute. *Lawrence* is also clear in stating that a majority opinion which deems an act immoral may not be used to bind the minority. If the majority's moral code may not be used as a frame of reference, can any moral code be used? If not, then are there any limitations that may be placed on attempts at self-actualization?

***Perry* is a watershed** for the left. We should not be surprised if within the next two years Judge Walker's new definition of marriage is sanctioned by the Supreme Court. Of the six justices supporting the *Lawrence* opinion, three are still on the Court (Kennedy, Ginsburg, and Breyer), and the other three have been replaced by Alito, Sotomayor, and Kagan. While Alito will likely oppose *Perry*, this still leaves five votes for Judge Walker's work. And five is all that the liberal culture warriors need.

But this does not mean that all is lost. *Perry* provides the right with a weapon, though it is up to conservative grassroots and national leaders to use it. *Perry* is perhaps the greatest affront to popular sovereignty seen in decades. Judge Walker plainly averred that the fact "[t]hat the majority of California voters supported Proposition 8 is irrelevant." If the people cannot enshrine into fundamental law the traditional definition of marriage accepted by generations of Americans, then what can they do? Conservatives are fond of rhetoric about judicial dictatorships and judges acting as Platonic guardians. *Perry* provides ammunition to show that this is not hyperbole but an accurate

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

assessment of the federal judiciary. *Perry* shows that popular sovereignty is but a ghost and invites the people to do something about it.

Perry also offers lessons about judicial activism. Judge Walker decreed that sex has no relation to marriage and that anyone who believes otherwise is irrational. He found that there is no reasonably conceivable state of facts that could provide a rational basis for defining marriage as a covenant between one man and one woman. The dictionary defines *rational* as "having or exercising reason, sound judgment, or good sense." This is not a high mark to meet. If the promotion of childrearing in two-parent homes with a father and mother is not at a minimum rational, what is rational? For the purposes of Judge Walker, *Perry* is grounded in a worldview congruent with his own homosexual lifestyle. If anyone doubts the indictment that judges too often write their personal opinions into law, *Perry* is solid evidence to the contrary.

Finally, conservatives can garner lessons about compromising with the radical left. California already had in place a law allowing domestic partnerships. Homosexual couples enjoyed the same legal rights and responsibilities as married (heterosexual) couples, but the homosexual unions were not called marriage. Homosexual partners, for example, had access to survivor pension benefits, access to family insurance plans, and rights of inheritance just like married couples. This did not satisfy the homosexual lobby; it only fueled efforts to eviscerate the traditional definition of marriage. *Perry* shows that the gay lobby is not concerned with toleration—the right to be left alone—but instead desires universal acceptance of homosexuality as the equivalent of heterosexuality. If you do not agree with them, you will be called irrational and disregarded—just like the experts who offered favorable opinions about Proposition 8 in court.

As a rejection of traditional boundaries and ancient truths, *Perry* is the progeny of a postmodern mind. On his own initiative, Judge Walker seeks to move Americans beyond what he views as their primitive thought and practices about marriage. By abandoning old-fashioned tenets of judicial restraint, where a jurist refrains from passing judgment on the wisdom of an act but simply measures it against the written Constitution and the intent of its ratifiers, Judge Walker elevates himself above the people. For the time being, he basks in victory from his judicial perch. Will the people suffer him to remain there?

William J. Watkins, Jr., is the author of Reclaiming the American Revolution *(Palgrave 2004).*

Don't miss the* Chronicles *moment . . .

Become a card-carrying supporter of your favorite magazine.

www.ChroniclesMagazine.org/member

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Going Rove

THE IDEA that the "far right" is on the cultural warpath is, like most liberal canards, the exact opposite of the truth. See, for example, the sort of treatment handed out to the victor in Delaware's GOP senatorial primary. The conservative Catholic Christine O'Donnell, a 46-year-old Sarah Palin knockoff, was immediately held up for ridicule on account of her views on . . . onanism! A video of her made more than 20 years ago, in which she advocates chastity before marriage and denounces masturbation as, well, yucky, immediately went up on MSNBC, and the left-wing blogs followed up with a frenzy of chortling. Chastity! Anti-Onanism! In Washington, D.C.? It'll never happen.

The snickering had hardly subsided when Rachel Maddow and Keith Olbermann acquired an unlikely ally: Republican grand strategist Karl Rove. Appearing on FOX News, he lashed out at O'Donnell:

> Look, she believes she's going to win, and that's what a candidate ought to believe. I think the questions about why she had a problem for five years with paying her federal income taxes, why her house was foreclosed on and put up a for sale by the sheriff, why it took 16 years for her to settle her college debt and get her diploma after she went around for years claiming she was a college graduate . . . these and other troubling sort of personal background things, she thinks she's explained them. I think a lot of voters in Delaware are going to want more than she's offering to them right now. We'll see . . . I mean 48 days from now, we'll see if these issues matter or not and if she wins, more power to her. She's right on the issues, but I think the voters of Delaware are not just going to want to know "Are you right on the issues?", but do you have the character, and record, and background that gives me the confidence you're the right person for the job.

Setting aside the merit of O'Donnell's candidacy, and the intriguing question of just why the Machiavelli of the Bushian Old Guard would go after the candidate of his own party in such grossly personal terms, let's look at what indicates a lack of "character" from the Rovian perspective.

Number one on his list: anyone who can't make his mortgage payments. That right there eliminates a large and growing segment of the population from ever running for office. O'Donnell attended a sheriff's sale of her foreclosed home and got a good friend to buy it back on her behalf—clearly an example of moral turpitude if ever there was one. As for her college loan: At least she repaid it when she could. But such arguments fall on deaf ears as far as our elites are concerned; financial problems are not part of their universe. Sure, they've heard people "out there" are having a hard time of it, and Republican insiders like Rove are perfectly willing to use this to regain power, but as for admitting these serfs to the halls of power—it's unthinkable.

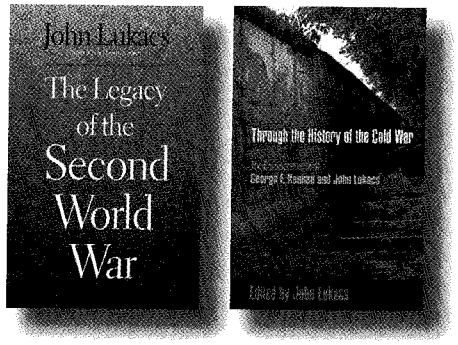
In her speech to the Values Voters summit, O'Donnell lit into what she described as "the ruling class"—the D.C. "cocktail circuit," the "small elites" that expropriate our tax dollars and try to dominate our lives: "The small elite don't get us," she averred. "They call us wacky, they call us wing nuts. We call us 'we the people.'"

"We don't want to take our country back," she went on to say. "We are the country."

O'Donnell didn't mention Rove by name, but if anyone personifies the ruling class in this country it is Señor Rove, who is so out of touch with the country and what's happening in it that he thinks it's good politics to go on television and denounce someone for not making her mortgage payment. He thinks it's "smart" to go after someone who had trouble paying back her college loan. Such a man is deaf, dumb, and blind to what's going on around him: deaf to the cries of his countrymen, who are suffering through what many believe is America's Second Great Depression; dumb enough to believe his disdain will do anything but blow back on him and his cronies; and blind to the crisis of his own party, which brought on this disaster in partnership with their Democratic clones.

The Tea Partiers may not lead Americans out of the wilderness, but at least they know the country has lost its way. Our ruling elite is content to go along in the same old way, making the same mistakes and taking their cut off the top, hoping the crisis will pass. It won't. The O'Donnells of this world may not have all the answers, but they are beginning to ask the right questions—and that's an auspicious start. ◆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Cold War, Warm Friends

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

The Legacy of the Second World War
by John Lukacs
New Haven: Yale University Press
201 pp., $26.00

Through the History of the Cold War: The Correspondence of George F. Kennan and John Lukacs
John Lukacs, ed.
Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press
276 pp., $39.95

THE LEGACIES OF EVERY WAR include controversy regarding its origins, its prosecution, its conclusion, and its material and political results. In the case of World War II, John Lukacs argues that among its major legacies was the Cold War, whose cause was the rigid division of Europe agreed upon by Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin while hostilities yet continued. As for the Cold War itself, its legacy was the debate, heated to the point almost of rhetorical violence, over the origins of that phenomenon and the extent to which the two sides—East and West, communist and free world, the Soviet Union and the United States—bear moral responsibility for it.

One of these books deals with the first of these issues, the other with the second—and so much else as well.

World War II, John Lukacs believes, was the work of one man, and one man alone: Adolf Hitler. But that man was enormously complex, at once *sui generis* (as indeed every human being is) and the product of Europe's almost infinitely complicated history. Among that history's salient elements, the immediate cause of Hitler, and thus of World War II, was, Lukacs claims, democracy—the source of both nationalism and socialism in Europe and on the North American continent. Following the Revolutionary Age in Europe that ended with the revolutions of 1848-49, a series of wars occurred; wars not between classes, as Marx and the revolutionists themselves had expected, but between nations. "Both nationalism and socialism came out of the democratization of the world that Tocqueville foresaw, examples of which reach back to centuries even before the Modern Age." Hitler's peculiar genius allowed him to recognize that socialism, to succeed, must be national, not international;

> that the struggles of classes meant less than the conflicts of nations; that the sentiments and ideas of people, anchored within their nationality, were stronger and deeper than propositions of their material conditions. In sum, he proposed a marriage of nationalism and socialism—but with emphasis on the former.

One of the fundamental differences between the world wars was that the first conflict was a war between states rather than between classes and the various political ideas supporting them.

> [I]n 1939-1945 there were millions of internal, not only external, enemies of their governments, Communists in different states across the world whose sympathies (and, on occasion, allegiances) were to the Soviet Union. There were other millions whose sympathies (and, on occasion, allegiances) were for Hitler's Germany and Imperial Japan.

Yet as Hitler subordinated socialism to nationalism, so (as Lukacs has argued over the entirety of his career) did Joseph Stalin. Stalin was fully aware of the weaknesses of international socialism, for which, in any event, he cared little. (According to Lukacs, he detested ideologically committed communists, considering that they were not to be trusted.) He believed, as did Churchill but not Roosevelt, in the division of Europe. But his interest lay in ensuring the security of the Soviet Union, not in communizing Eastern, let alone Western, Europe. Churchill, perhaps sensing this, was eager to agree upon the postwar division of Europe while the war still lasted; Roosevelt did not, partly because he liked Stalin, approved of the Soviet Union (to which the American public also was sympathetic), and did not wish to quarrel with its leader; partly, also, because he hoped to win the war in Asia with Stalin's help after the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

defeat of Germany. As a result, Lukacs says, the U.S. government and the American people became aware of the division of Europe and the putative dangers of Russian expansion too late—not, as left-wing critics of the Cold War were to argue subsequently, prematurely. Indeed, the Soviet Union at the end of the war held less of Europe than had czarist Russia a century before. "But now conditions were different. Beyond the confines of the tsar's empire there had existed no Russian sphere of interest. What now did this 'sphere of interest' mean?"

John Lukacs speculates that, had Roosevelt and his State Department succeeded in convincing Stalin to acquiesce in an interpretation of the Yalta Declaration of Liberated Europe that permitted the installation of governments in Eastern Europe which would be unequivocally pro-Russian but not ideologically communist, the Cold War might have been averted. That they did not succeed in this Lukacs attributes to the fact that Stalin "was not that kind of a man." This is not because he was an ideologue; rather, he was realistic enough to understand that noncommunist governments under the sway of the Soviet Union would inevitably grow toward Western Europe and away from Moscow. Hence, he insisted on the creation of governments in Eastern Europe that would be completely in thrall to Russia and cut off from contact with Western Europe, no matter the indignation and anger this provoked in Washington. "That," Lukacs concludes simply, "was how the cold war began."

Regarding the Cold War, there have been two historical interpretations. The first holds that the United States in particular, and the West generally, reacted in a timely way to the actions and deceptions of Russia, beginning in 1945; the second (the so-called revisionist line), that the American government, prompted by suspicion and anticommunist prejudice, responded too early, thereby encouraging further aggression by Stalin. John Lukacs proposes a third interpretation:

> This is that the American concern with Russia came not too early but too late; that Stalin should have been confronted with the precise and practical questions about the actual limits of his postwar sphere of interest, including the political status of at least some of the countries overrun by the Russian armies, sooner rather than later, in 1944 or 1945 but certainly before the end of the Second World War in Europe.

George F. Kennan, a former U.S. deputy ambassador and subsequently U.S. ambassador to Moscow, later an architect of the Marshall Plan and the initiator of America's policy of "containment" in respect of the Soviet Union, came to feel that his policies had been both misunderstood and misrepresented. Having believed during the war and after that the Soviet Union was inherently expansionary, by 1948 he was arguing that the time had arrived for diplomatic initiatives to Moscow. This put him at odds with the Truman administration and with Dean Acheson, who fired him on becoming secretary of state in 1949. The next year Kennan left the State Department; thereafter, he was an outspoken critic of Washington's increasingly belligerent stance toward the Soviet Union. His writings and speeches resonated with the thinking of a 28-year-old refugee from Hungary, a then-unknown historian, who in 1952 wrote him an admiring letter, to which Kennan replied almost at once. It was the beginning of a correspondence—and a friendship—lasting more than 50 years. The last exchange occurred not long before Kennan's death on March 17, 2005: one year, one month, and one day after his 100th birthday.

George Kennan and John Lukacs concurred on just about every matter of importance, and many others not so important. Their agreement began with their objections to U.S. foreign policy, their disgust at the replacement of a healthy American patriotism with an hysterical and wholly ideological form of anticommunism, and their detestation of the tendency of both the American people and the U.S. government to confuse the clash of state interests with ideological disagreements. But there was so much more than that to this remarkable meeting of minds. This collection of approximately 200 letters (about half of their complete correspondence) tells us how much more.

John Lukacs and George Kennan were separated in age by 20 years. In 1952, George Kennan was one of the most distinguished men of his time, while Lukacs was at the beginning of his career. One of the most touching aspects of this book is the subtle but constantly growing alteration in their relationship, from one of acolyte and master to that of almost equals. (That "almost" is thanks entirely to the refusal of the younger man, now recognized by a relatively small but highly sophisticated audience as being among the foremost historians and thinkers of the 20th century, to put himself on the same plane as his elder friend.) Another is the deepening friendship and mutual understanding between the two seen against the background of a civilization sinking ever deeper into intellectual and moral confusion, political and social decay, and barbarism at the end of an age—an age which both men felt to be their own, however attenuated it had become in their lifetimes and even before. In this way the ravages of individual mortality reflect the mortality of societies and civilizations, precluding personal consolation taken from an assurance of social continuity. Yet neither man, both of them believing Christians (one Presbyterian, the other Catholic) is entirely without hope with regard to the future; their attitudes exhibit a determination to sustain hope in hope (which is only the same

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thing as hope in faith).

George Kennan's and John Lukacs's shared opinions of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War were hardly fortuitous. Quite the opposite: They represented the inevitable meeting, on a particular subject, of minds that saw the world in similar terms and from a similar historical point of view, despite their very different origins and influences. For Kennan and Lukacs, the American response, popular as well as official, to the Soviets' behavior in 1945 and after was more than symptomatic of postwar America; it was a prominent aspect of it. Both men deplored popular anticommunism as a form of hysteria induced in part by politicians presenting themselves as moralists, though they were indeed only ideologues. They were offended and disheartened by, above everything, the anticommunists' insistence on presenting what was, beneath the rhetoric and posturing from Moscow, a more or less traditional clash of rival states and state interests as an apocalyptic struggle between the Power of Good and the Power of Evil. To their minds, anticommunist sentiment was an unpleasant, dishonest, and dangerous substitute for the old-fashioned patriotism to which it pretended to appeal. But it was also a symptom of, and an encouragement to, the coarsening of American political life, and of the American intellect and understanding. In this, John Lukacs perceived the rise of a populist nationalism that he thought (and still thinks) to be the direction of democracy (in particular, American democracy) in our time. Thus, while the Cold War subsided over the years, the damage it had helped to inflict on American politics, and on American political discourse, remained. Thus Lukacs to Kennan in October 1984, following Ronald Reagan's and Walter Mondale's third presidential debate:

> I was shocked—and perhaps even frightened—by the abysmal ignorance of these two men, the source of which . . . was a view of the world which was narrow and unhistorical perhaps without precedent. This horrid compound of narrowness and extent, of utter parochialism and universality a—relatively—new thing. I doubt whether their vision of the world had any resemblance of what may have existed in the minds of even the most mediocre nineteenth-century presidents.

SURPRISINGLY (or perhaps not so surprisingly), George Kennan, the public figure and sometime man of affairs, presents himself in this collection as even more pessimistic than his more private friend. "It seems to me," he writes (in 1953),

> That if we manage to survive these coming years without a new catastrophe . . . it will not be because of ourselves but despite of ourselves: by virtue, that is, of the fact that we have so little, rather than so much, control over the course of events, that the stuff of our human reactions is so obstreperous and so little understood that our efforts to affect it have only a sort of coincidental result.

Both Kennan and Lukacs deplore the replacement of the old America by the new through mass immigration produced by immigration "reform" in the 1960's. Beyond that, however, Kennan sounds refreshingly radical. Though brought up (in Wisconsin) to regard Abraham Lincoln as a great man and the preservation of the Union as a saving accomplishment, he subsequently developed doubts (he writes) that keeping North and South together was in fact a good thing; he goes so far as to express the wish that the country of today might be split up. Elsewhere, Kennan further doubts that the influence of the United States on the rest of the world has been, on balance, beneficial. Again, he expresses limited enthusiasm for "the multi-party system" as something worthy of universal installation in democratizing countries. And he takes an explicitly Burkean stand on the matter of political representation in a democracy: "The task of the populace is to select, through proper electoral procedures, its own rulers; God forbid that it should ever itself attempt to rule." Kennan suggests the almost Platonic idea for the creation of an appointed National Council of State for the purpose, not of replacing elected officials, but of examining problems in a manner of which the political establishment is incapable. More broadly, he questions the "intellectual idols" of our time: urbanization, democratization, and "the passion to insert the machine in place of the human hand in the productive processes of our life."

Over the summer of 1998, John Lukacs expresses his conviction that "we are only at the beginning of the Democratic Age." From 1500 to 2000, he writes, aristocracy and democracy coexisted. But now,

> democracy [has] become the absolute acceptance of majority rule. (In some cases: democracy having become populism.) But this goes beyond politics; it involves society, "culture," education, etc., etc.

In reply, Kennan agrees that "of course" we are at the beginning of a new age—in which, he expects, European civilization will be not only abandoned but forgotten, through the related abandonment of the literature and poetry that have hitherto kept civilization alive. In place of civilization, he predicts "a long period of enslavement, or rather self-enslavement as people allow themselves to be dominated by their machines and inventions.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thus, he suggests, "democratic is hardly the word to describe this new age. Perhaps parliamentary government will keep representative government alive." As for the United States, however, he foresees a quite different future.

THE KENNAN-LUKACS correspondence begins within the context of the Cold War and ends in that of President George W. Bush's pseudo-Christian military crusade to impose democracy on the world: two far worse than misguided efforts stemming from the same ideological root. Lukacs asserts that, sooner or later, the American people must be judged: "[W]ill they accept this now present vile propagation of a universal nationalism, or will they not . . . ?" We do not have Kennan's reply to this letter, but a passage in an earlier one (dating from 1987) suggests what his answer might have been:

> What one may not do is to confuse the purposes of and activities of the governmental power with the advancement of divine purpose. To attempt to associate these things is to misconstrue and abuse the real nature of government and to blaspheme that of God. Particularly is this true when we attempt to picture ourselves in the form of a national community rather than as morally responsible individuals.

Chilton Williamson, Jr., is Chronicles' *senior editor for books.*

Report From Summer

by David Mason

The afternoon yawns in the arms of a cedar tree
daubing shade pools across the weedy grass.
Once there was no time for this, but now
the hours are rich with being and nothingness,

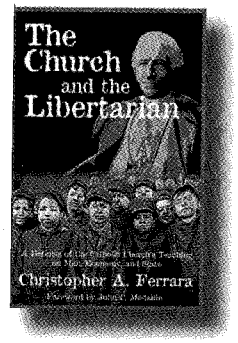
a heat-stunned dialectic of the waters
of somnolence—no, the waters of this lake.
Boats go buzzing by like fat mosquitoes
sated and happy for their freedom's sake.

Sommelier, bring me the key to the city,
bubbling, chilled, in a long slender glass,
key to the heat of the day, key to the lack
of regard for consequence. Let it all pass

in the half-naked glow of a nereid's flesh
(that dorsal flash at the corner of my eye),
in children's laughter from the cedar swing,
in saying we have other fish to fry

and meaning it, though dinner's years away.
The waxing moon will light the waves tonight.
I'll set aside a paperback to sleep
at least a decade in reflected light.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Anarcho-Utopia Revisited

by R. Cort Kirkwood

The Church and the Libertarian: A Defense of the Catholic Church's Teaching on Man, Economy, and State
by Christopher A. Ferrara
Forest Lake, MN: The Remnant Press
326 pp, $25.00

Several years back, I was a contributor to the eponymous website of Lew Rockwell, founder of the libertarian Ludwig Von Mises Institute at Auburn University. In addition to publishing my syndicated column, the site also permitted me access to its blog. One day, in a blog post, I denied a dogma of Austrian economics, that of self-ownership. Because a man owns himself, the late Austrian economist Murray Rothbard said, he may do anything to himself he wishes (thus suicide and abortion are not moral abominations), but he may do no physical violence to, or steal from, another. I explained that self-ownership is a logical impossibility, because ownership requires a superior-subordinate relationship. A man cannot be superior or subordinate to himself.

I was excommunicated. No more posting at *LewRockwell.com*. Now comes Catholic lawyer and writer Christopher Ferrara with an entire book to educate the Austrians where I could not.

Ferrara likely would not have devoted such time to libertarian Austrian ideology if the Mises Institute and its chief acolytes, Lew Rockwell, Jeffrey Tucker, and best-selling author Tom Woods, did not claim Austrian ideology is compatible with the Catholic Faith—while declaring that Church social teaching on the economy is wrong. Popes, the Misesians argue, know nothing of economics and have no right to discuss anything touching on how an economy should work. Thus Ferrara's book, *The Church and the Libertarian*, which grew out of a series of articles he wrote for the *Remnant*, as well as a long debate a few years back between Woods and the editors of *Chronicles* at the magazine's website. The Austrians are, as *Chronicles* editor Tom Fleming said at the time, "misleading Catholics."

Woods is Ferrara's chief target, because he is this creed's most visible spokesman. Thanks in part to Woods' epistles, based on the infallible teachings of Ludwig von Mises and Murray Rothbard (men Ferrara sarcastically calls popes), this liberal ideology is becoming a faith unto itself. And its tenets are in competition with the long tradition of Catholic social teaching.

Austrian economics is based on what Ferrara calls Rothbard's Duologue: "Thou shalt respect the 'self-ownership' of others" and "Thou shalt respect the property of others." Rothbard, an agnostic, attempted to ground his two precepts in natural law. But as Ferrara explains, the Duologue

> has no divine source; no one is objectively and absolutely obliged to observe it. . . . Where is the binding obligation to respect another's natural rights if there is no divine Obligor who ultimately judges and punishes the creations He has endowed with these rights?

Thus, Rothbard essentially argued the tautology that "man has natural rights because they are natural to him."

The Austrian view of the "nature of man" is different from the Catholic view. The Austrians argue that "no man can have the 'right' to compel someone to do a positive act." The Church teaches that, on certain matters, men are duty-bound to each other. Rothbard believed that parents could legally starve their children, that laws against defamation are a violation of the defamer's right to self-ownership, and that blackmail was a service because the person being blackmailed protected himself by paying the blackmailer.

Austrianism is a self-contradictory ideology. Rothbard believed it "immoral" for governments to control such vices as prostitution, the drug trade, and abortion. The Austrian system purports to be "value free," or amoral, and deal only with the market and the economic laws that govern it. Then who are they, Ferrara asks, to judge what is right and wrong for a government to do with regard to social issues if it does not interfere in the economy? Claiming that government interference in prostitution is "immoral" is itself a moral judgment. What does a parent starving his child have to do with "value-free economics," and why should Murray Rothbard offer an opinion on it?

The Austrians rationalize the contra-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

diction. Interfering with these vices is immoral because prostitution, drug-dealing, and abortion are operations of the market in which "free" individuals make "value-free exchanges" under the narrow moral code of the Duologue. Individuals own themselves and their property, and may exchange anything they see fit to exchange and dispose of their property as they wish. Ownership is absolute. Thus, Austrians argue, the "value-free laws" of economics do not concern themselves with man's higher object—virtue and, in the end, Heaven. The Church says all man's endeavors must be ordered to that end.

For all their claims to steer clear of morals and theology, Ferrara notes, the Austrians never cease hurling moral and theological thunderbolts. Austrianism's extremes are found not in economics but in the social teachings of its ministers. Austrian Walter Block, who teaches at a Catholic university, believes a woman has the right to "evict" an unborn child from the womb. The little one is no more than a squatter. Jeff Tucker, a libertarian luminary and Latin Mass Catholic, believes mothers have the right to sell their children to homosexual couples. Lew Rockwell believes Ebenezer Scrooge to have been a model businessman—*before* his ghostly nightmares. Bob Cratchit freely accepted his wage. He could quit whenever he wanted to.

These are the depths to which Austrianism descends. Any decent person, and any "minimally educated Catholic," Ferrara observes, must oppose it.

The bulk of the book is Ferrara's explanation of why the popes aren't dopes when it comes to economics. His main focus is on Tom Woods, with whom he coauthored a book about the modern Church. Ferrara wrote *The Church and the Libertarian* to challenge his former colleague's repeated claim (in numerous articles and in *The Church and the Market: A Catholic Defense of the Free Economy*) that a steady succession of popes knew nothing of economics, and therefore Church social teaching "must be systematically reconsidered."

Ferrara explains in detail why the popes have both a right and a duty to impart social teaching. The perennial teaching of the Faith, going back to St. Thomas Aquinas and, further, to the early Church Fathers and the Bible, is that men have charitable duties to one another regarding wages, taking interest on loans, and other matters the Austrians claim to be "value free." Indeed, even the ancient Greek philosophers taught such things. Ferrara ably demonstrates that a man's financial and economic decisions aren't merely governed by abstruse and immutable economic "laws." Rather, they are moral decisions with profound moral and spiritual consequences. He demolishes Woods not only by catching him in repeated self-contradictions but by showing the libertarian justification of anything a businessman does to be ludicrous.

Consider Woods' argument on wages. Wage rates "necessarily reflect fundamental economic realities and are objectively just." Market wage rates "cannot be held to moral critique by outside observers," and "accusations of injustice and immorality that have been leveled against certain employers and the economic system as a whole are not justified." And last, "in no areas is the market arbitrary and unfair, and no human intervention is needed to rectify injustice." These are arguments that use moral terms, even though Austrians tell us that such terms are verboten in discussing their "science." Woods and the Austrians make similar arguments about price-gouging (there is no such thing) and usury (what's that?). The market never errs.

Yet the "free market" Austrians revere doesn't exist and never has. Reviewing a little history, Ferrara reminds us that government created the means by which capitalism arose during the Industrial Revolution in England. Those means included tossing peasants off their land, herding them into cities with Poor and Settlement Laws, and dissolving monasteries and confiscating other lands from the Catholic Church, creating a vast legion of paupers who ultimately ended up working in factories.

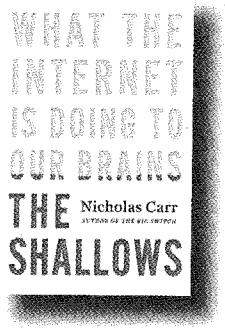
Ferrara explicitly states that Austrians are not wrong to critique and oppose the government Leviathan. But they are wrong to deny religion and morality a role in that critique and in market decisions, and wrong to claim that major corporations are incapable of error because economic "laws" dictate their behavior. Economic laws do not determine all financial decisions. The "market" does not mandate compensation of $300 million per year, a private jet, and three country-club memberships for an executive. The market would not stop an executive from voluntarily taking a $100 million pay cut so his employees could have health insurance.

The Catholic principle of subsidiarity implicitly limits the size of government, but the Austrians go much further, advocating an "anarcho-capitalist" utopia in which government is abolished. Being a social animal, man, Ferrara observes (quoting those dopey popes), was meant to live in communities under human authority. Yet Ferrara is more consistent than the Austrians when he argues that if centralized government should be considered evil, so should centralized business. He concludes his book by making the case for distributism, the humane economic order championed by Hilaire Belloc and G.K. Chesterton.

The Catholics who run the Austrian movement, Ferrara makes crystal clear, take their guidance not from the popes but from two Jewish agnostics. Throughout his works, Mises, who called Christ a "socialist," is adamantly anti-Christian. As Ferrara once warned Catholics in the subtitle to his first major article about Austrianism, "Don't Go There." I wouldn't go there, and I was cast to the outer darkness to weep and gnash my teeth.

R. Cort Kirkwood is the author of Real Men: Ten Courageous Americans To Know and Admire.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Our Aboriginal Future

by Andrei Navrozov

The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains
by Nicholas Carr
New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
276 pp., $26.95

Our ancestors, who lived in the forest, never had a moment's peace. The forest spoke to them, ordered them about, punished or rewarded them, as their descendants would say now, 24/7. Every movement of the stone, every crack of the bough, and every cry of the bird had a meaning, and the meaning was largely binary, signifying either danger or opportunity. The signals, moreover, came all at once, in a swarm of portents that had to be identified, interpreted, and acted upon just about simultaneously.

Civilization was, above all, time for reflection. Not the earliest human response to the chaos of stimuli, but an innovative kind of thinking, perhaps within the protected enclosure of a dwelling—a deliberation distinguished by linearity. History, prophecy, and speech were all born of that noble effort, as it is impossible to project a future event without analyzing the past, or without having recourse to something like syntax. Where it had been the forest that set his thinking agenda, man was now in control of his thought, setting himself subjects for ratiocination and arriving at logical conclusions.

Millennia later, that linear world became man's unique habitation. Almost everything he thought and did had an *if* and a *then* as points of departure, deliberately posited on the same ratiocinative plane. Syllogism and syntax, map and book, mathematics and medicine—and of course the weapons that secured for the more linear-minded peoples of the world dominance over the less linear-minded, such as the repeating rifle and the atom bomb—none of this would have been possible without the will, and the time, to think things through.

The thesis of Nicholas Carr's book is that it's all over, and that the internet has restored man to his aboriginal state. The difference is that instead of the forest, wherein lurked danger or else opportunity, the chaos now shaping his mind is more like a training exercise, with no individual opportunity to speak of and only a collective notion of danger. Besides, when he lived in the forest, at least he was physically fit. Now he is just harebrained.

Carr does not address what to my mind is the key question of the epoch—namely, for what sort of existence is the training exercise preparing us? What he does do is furnish ample proof that the neurological implications of "connectivity," the hyperalert but quasi-animal state in which much of mankind now passes its days and nights, add up to a physiological revolution. Like all revolutions, it is reactionary and regressive.

It is not unusual for an office worker, the hunter-gatherer of our day, "to glance at his in-box thirty or forty times an hour," just as his ancestor would at the dark bower that he had not dared to explore. Hypermedia, introduced by internet companies to keep his attention, subverts "the patriarchal authority of the author," as the abundance of links on his screen smothers what it pretends to foster. Social networks bombard their hundreds of millions of members with "a never-ending 'stream' of 'real-time updates,' brief messages about, as a Twitter slogan puts it, 'what's happening right now.'"

In most countries "people spend, on average, between nineteen and twenty-seven seconds looking at a page before moving on to the next one, including the time required for the page to load." In fact, "it almost seems that they go online to avoid reading in the traditional sense." From "the myriad visual clues that flash across our retinas as we navigate the online world," there is no escape, no reprieve, not even a nanosecond's respite. It "turns us into lab rats constantly pressing levers," yet congratulating ourselves on our achievement the way primitive man—or the lab rat, for that matter—never did.

Sound like a nightmare? Why, what are you, some kind of Luddite? "The time has come," explains Mark Federman of the University of Toronto,

> for teachers and students alike to abandon the "linear, hierarchical" world of the book and enter the Web's "world of ubiquitous connectivity and pervasive proximity"—a world in which

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"the greatest skill" involves "discovering emergent meanings among contexts that are continually in flux."

Sound like a loser? Why, what are you, some kind of fascist? "People have increasingly decided that Tolstoy's sacred work isn't actually worth the time it takes to read it," declares Clay Shirky of New York University, relegating *War and Peace* to the remainder bin of history with "Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* and other novels that until recently were considered, in Shirky's cutting phrase, 'Very Important in some vague way.'" Indeed, "our old literary habits 'were just a side-effect of living in an environment of impoverished access.' Now that the Net has granted us abundant 'access,' we can at last lay those tired habits aside."

Not only is it that, statistically, the greater part of what the new audiovisual technology gives us unprecedented "access" to is animalistic pornography, a perverse echo of the "'sensuous involvement' with the world" that Marshall McLuhan, for one, "believed that preliterate people enjoyed." It is that in living this technology "24/7"—as we have never lived television or film, to say nothing of the linear media of the tablet, the scroll, the book, and the newspaper—we have begun to alter our brains to cope with total immersion in an environment within which the stimuli it delivers are being processed. Accordingly, Carr devotes several sections of his book to scientific studies that identify and quantify the neurological consequences of the new *modus videndi*.

It does not make for a pretty picture, to say the least. As the vital paths of our brain become "the paths of least resistance," while superficiality, instead of a weakness to be tolerated or despised, as it once was, becomes a rigorous and vaunted condition of the mind, our thinking, once "Aristotelian in its emphasis on discerning abstract patterns behind the visible surfaces of the material world," recalls once more that of the aborigine. In other words, its overall pattern recalls that "natural condition of mankind," under the constraints of which "the life of man," according to Hobbes, was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."

In conclusion, I should like to add a personal note. Influenced as I was in my upbringing by the Russian literary and philosophical tradition—whose exponents gloried in the irrational, often demoting reason and logic in their hierarchy of values to such scandalous lows that it began to seem that Aristotle and Newton were no better than a cobbler and a tinker, respectively—upon reading Carr's book I began seeing things in a somewhat less radical light. It is all very well to have the stream of consciousness and the ecstatic moment, it is quite all right to contradict oneself and to play roulette with one's own life, and it is wonderful to drink like this good poet or smoke opium like that one, but the truth is that it is linearity that has made us what we are in the brief oasis of time we call civilization.

It looks like the oasis is about to turn into a mirage. Carr has issued a cogent warning, but unfortunately, nobody's going to heed it. With all that abundant access to women taking off their clothes, to say nothing of presidents on Twitter, who's got the intellectual energy for reading books?

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European editor.*

An Excerpt

The book survived the phonograph as it had the newspaper. Listening didn't replace reading. Edison's invention came to be used mainly for playing music rather than declaiming poetry and prose. During the twentieth century, book reading would withstand a fresh onslaught of seemingly mortal threats: moviegoing, radio listening, TV viewing. Today, books remain as commonplace as ever, and there's every reason to believe that printed works will continue to be produced and read, in some sizable quantity, for years to come. While physical books may be on the road to obsolescence, the road will almost certainly be a long and winding one. Yet the continued existence of the codex, though it may provide some cheer to bibliophiles, doesn't change the fact that books and book reading, at least as we've defined those things in the past, are in their cultural twilight. As a society, we devote ever less time to reading printed words, and even when we do read them, we do so in the busy shadow of the Internet. "Already," the literary critic George Steiner wrote in 1997, "the silences, the arts of concentration and memorization, the luxuries of time on which 'high reading' depended are largely disposed." But "these erosions," he continued, "are nearly insignificant compared with the brave new world of the electronic." Fifty years ago, it would have been possible to make the case that we were still in the age of print. Today, it is not. . . .

Our desire for fast-moving, kaleidoscopic diversions didn't originate with the invention of the World Wide Web. It has been present and growing for many decades, as the pace of our work and home lives has quickened and as broadcast media like radio and television have presented us with a welter of programs, messages, and advertisements. The Internet, though it marks a radical departure from traditional media in many ways, also represents a continuation of the intellectual and social trends that emerged from people's embrace of the electric media of the twentieth century and that have been shaping our lives and thoughts ever since. The distractions in our lives have been proliferating for a long time, but never has there been a medium that, like the Net, has been programmed to so widely [*sic*] scatter our attention and to do it so insistently.

—*from* The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains, *by Nicholas Carr*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Aaron D. Wolf

Mormon Apocalypse, Part II

When Glenn Beck took the podium at his Restoring Honor rally, he began by listing off the names of American heroes and identifying their motivation to fight for their country: "You cannot coexist with evil." If evil has reared its ugly head, an honorable man, like Washington and Lincoln, must stand and fight.

It's a phrase that glimmers with righteous indignation. You think of that masked molester with a gun shimmying through your daughter's bedroom window, and you want to go blow his brains out. Who tolerates evil?

"We have a choice to make today," added Beck.

Over the course of his 6,000-word altar call, he clarified what he meant. As Americans, we must choose to exercise "faith, hope, and love." We must "pick up our stick" as Moses did, and stand for freedom. We must not fall asleep like the disciples of Jesus at Gethsemane. We must tithe at a church, synagogue, or mosque. We must "pledge our lives and fortunes" to eliminating our national debt. We must study the "sacred scriptures of our country"—the Constitution, the Gettysburg Address, "I Have a Dream." "This isn't about one church or one faith over another; it is about the eternal principles of God."

That last is an interesting contrast. In another time, "denominational differences," as Charlie Brown told Linus, tended to separate. And there were even bigger heretics to fry when it came to the differences between "faiths" such as Christianity and Islam. Or Christianity and Mormonism.

But Glenn Beck is a Mormon, and these "eternal principles of God" he espouses reflect that fact. And for conservatives standing at the anxious bench on the Washington Mall, Beck was the one mediator between Mormon ideologue Cleon Skousen and man.

Like Beck's, Skousen's Mormonism is not the sort that publicly preaches that Jesus and Lucifer are brethren or that Elohim was once a mere mortal. In *The 5,000 Year Leap: Twenty-Eight Great Ideas That Are Changing the World* (Glenn Beck's favorite book) Skousen elaborates on a list of principles that, he claims, were cemented into the foundation of the United States. They include "The United States of America shall be a republic" (no. 12) and "The unalienable rights of the people are most likely to be preserved if the principles of government are set forth in a written constitution" (no. 18).

The trouble is, Skousen claims that these ideas were derived by the Founding Fathers from the Bible, and *modus ponens*, the United States is God's country. "The United States has a manifest destiny to be an example and a blessing to the entire human race" (no. 28).

What's so Mormon about all of this? The above could have been said by any number of Christians who paint the Founding Fathers not as the wise, classically trained deists they were but as devout Bibliophiles.

And yet everything about this America-is-God's-country ideology is Mormon to the core. It serves as the false foundation of a religion that finds the center of human history not in the Incarnation, Cross, and Resurrection of Christ but in "another revelation of Jesus Christ" in the terrestrial "promised land" on which we stand. It is Manichaean, declaring our external enemies evil and ourselves good, locating wickedness not in the hearts of sinful men but in the foes of a human government that will wither as the grass. It is the religion of America—not the real, historical America, but the America of myth and fantasy.

"If we do these things," Beck preached, "we will heal our nation." The phrase is reminiscent of 2 Chronicles 7:14, so often cited at rallies on the National Day of Prayer. *If my people, which are called by my name, shall . . .* return to limited government (no. 19)? Operate according to the will of the majority (no. 20)? Be debt-free (no. 27)? The assumption here is that Americans, like the Israelites of old, are uniquely "my [God's] people." And that it is not "I the Lord" but "We the gods" who can "heal their land."

Observers of American Christianity have noticed that, by and large, evangelicals no longer place much emphasis on America's divine mission to protect and defend Israel. Attendance at Christians-for-Israel conferences is down. John Hagee and the *Left Behind* movies now evoke embarrassment. The Bush Years are over. America has "outgrown" dispensationalism.

All true, but there has also been a transference. America's divine mission is no longer the protection of Israel but the preservation of "freedom" here and abroad. Muslims are no longer the enemy of Jews but the enemy of "our way of life." And conservative American Christians—Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox—are joining evangelicals in this new dispensationalism, as they did at the Restoring Honor rally (alongside "240 men and women from all faiths represent[ing] thousands of clergy"). There they applauded a man who denies that Jesus is the eternal Son of God, as he invited them to "find out who God truly is." ◆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Starting at Ground Zero

HERE IN ROCKFORD, as across the country, many Tea Party activists spent the latter part of the summer with their eyes figuratively fixed on the former site of the World Trade Center—or, rather, two blocks away.

The controversy over the Ground Zero Mosque generated much sound and fury, but in the end, what did it signify? Those who should have been most upset over the proposal to erect within shouting distance of the site of the September 11 attack a building to worship the god who inspired the mass murder of 3,000 of their fellow citizens—that is, the denizens of New York City—seemed, on the whole, to have little problem with it (direct relatives of the victims largely excepted). The imam of Park51 (as the proposed mosque is now known), on the basis of his speeches and remarks about Hamas, *sharia*, and September 11, can fairly be described as a radical Muslim, but until the GOP needed a hot-button issue to drive voters to the polls in November, Feisal Abdul Rauf's utterances had largely been ignored, and he had even been praised as a voice of "moderate Islam" and hired by the FBI and the State Department to conduct training sessions on the religion.

In other words, the controversy over the Ground Zero Mosque had all the hallmarks of an election-year distraction, designed to keep voters from remembering that, for the better part of eight years, the Republicans up for election in November had all applauded George W. Bush's repeated declarations that Islam is a "religion of peace" and that the events of September 11 had nothing to do with Islam, but were perpetrated by those who "hate us because we're free."

And the distraction worked. Here in Rockford, the very Tea Party activists who denounced the Ground Zero Mosque most loudly were largely silent about the erection of a four-story, 6,000-square-foot mosque in their own backyard.

Longtime readers of *Chronicles* will recall that Rockford's own mosque first appeared in these pages in April 2002, in an article recounting the day that *Chronicles*' associate editor Aaron Wolf and I spent at the Iqra School. Like the proposed Ground Zero Mosque, the Iqra School and the local mosque are contained in a Muslim "community center," housed in a former public school. As the local Muslim community has grown (the president of the Muslim Association of Greater Rockford estimates that there are currently 300 Muslim families in the city), they have raised the funds to build the standalone mosque, complete with a minaret and a gold dome that went up about the time that the Ground Zero controversy took off.

In fact, in a local TV news report in which *Chronicles* editor Thomas Fleming called the Ground Zero Mosque a "hostile gesture," the Rockford imam, Shpendim Nadzaku, an ethnic Albanian who studied at a state-run Islamic university in Saudi Arabia, characterized the Rockford mosque as a symbol of religious tolerance. Standing in the yard of the mosque, Nadzaku gestured for the TV cameras: "We have the mosque right here, the Muslim Community Center, to our right Our Master's United Methodist Church . . . "

Nadzaku praised the "spiritual, emotional, intellectual maturity of the people here in Rockford. They have only supported us." The imam is largely right, but why Rockfordians would support the construction of the grandiloquent new building is another question.

The most famous worshiper at the local mosque, Derrick Shareef, was arrested in December 2006 on charges of plotting to toss hand grenades into crowds of Christmas shoppers at the largest mall in the Rockford area. The FBI had targeted Shareef as the weak link in a larger investigation involving a former member of the Navy, Hassan Abujihaad, who had passed classified information on U.S. Navy operations in the Persian Gulf to Babar Ahmad, the proprietor of a jihadist website in Great Britain.

Much has been made of the Ground Zero imam's statement to a Jordanian newspaper in March 2009 that "The only law that the Muslim needs exists already in the Koran and the Hadith." But here in Rockford, Khalid Siddiqui, the president of the Muslim Association of Greater Rockford at the time that Aaron and I visited the school and mosque, praised Osama bin Laden (a mere five months after September 11), declared that *sharia* would come to the United States through constitutional means, and said that non-Muslims should not be concerned when it arrives. "Who is superior to us? Only God. If He made the laws, then He can be unbiased."

Last month, I argued that "thinking locally"—as the best among the Tea Partiers do—isn't enough; we have to act locally as well. Whether a mosque is built two blocks from Ground Zero means nothing to the daily lives of Rockfordians; whether a mosque run by radical Muslims becomes a magnet for further Islamic immigration to Rockford just might. ◆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Benedict Bounce

by Stuart Reid

ABOUT AN HOUR into the papal vigil in Hyde Park, I turned to one of my companions, a musical genius with bipolar disorder, and said, "You know what I think? I think this is pagan." No doubt my sour reaction to the singing and dancing and picnicking—to all that amplified noise, to the happiness on the faces of little children—was the product of nothing more serious than a clapped-out liver. Whatever the case, however, I did not like the vigil, and it so colored my view of the Holy Father's visit that I now find it hard to think of those four days of comfort and joy without occasionally yielding to cynicism and despair.

Much has been written about the bright-eyed faith of the young pilgrims in the park, and indeed at all the other papal venues, and rightly so. You could scarcely move at the vigil for all the love and goodwill. All I saw, however, was smiley-face Catholicism; EWTN Catholicism; Facebook Catholicism; clean and sober and good to go. To these youngsters everything was incredible, fantastic, amazing, overwhelming, unbelievable. The older pilgrims were almost as bad. By bad, of course, I do not mean *bad*. Most of these people, young and old, were good, holy, orthodox, kind, and selfless. I saw only one openly dissident pilgrim, a middle-aged man whose T-shirt carried the following instruction to the Holy Father: "Pope Benedict: ordain women now." Nobody took his eyes out.

It wasn't all music and mime, of course. Between the sets we were given supposedly wholesome messages in the form of prerecorded "testimonies" shown on huge screens dotted about the arena. Here was a pretty woman from Malawi. Her name was Ethel Singo, and she described herself as an asylum-seeker. "Last year," she said, "we were arrested in a dawn raid and taken to a detention center, where my children suffered terribly. We hope that the Church will join the many voices against the inhumane treatment of children in immigration removal centers." I winced; perhaps I snarled. At any rate my wife shot me a warning look. Don't start. Just don't.

Very well, my dear. But *please*. You cannot enforce immigration laws without detention centers, and if you feel compelled to take your children to live in a foreign country, you can't expect everything to go smoothly. Even a visit to Disneyland can be accompanied by anger, remorse, tantrums, knife-fights. As it happens, I have a low opinion of immigration officers, no matter whose side they are on, and of course the Church must speak out against the inhumane treatment of children wherever it occurs. To be true to Her calling, the Church must have the courage to defy Glenn Beck and promote social justice. But there is a season for everything. In the middle of a state visit by the Pope, at a time when churchmen are being accused of unspeakable crimes against children, the Church ought not to associate Herself in public with a woman who is charging the British state with cruelty to children. I was not, quite, the only one to take a negative view of the proceedings. Without the Pope and benediction, said the novelist Piers Paul Read, "the vigil would have seemed like a political rally of well-meaning leftists."

The Pope's arrival changed everything. Now "*Tantum Ergo*" replaced "I Say A Little Prayer For You." It was, as the kids say, awesome. During adoration and benediction some 80,000 people knelt or bowed their heads in silence. All you could hear was the clatter of police helicopters and the occasional whimper of a baby. It was magnificent. The question now is: Will this magnificence, and the magnificence of the other events—not least, of course, the beatification of John Henry Newman in Birmingham—make a lasting impression? One hopes so, but it is too early to talk of a "Benedict bounce." No doubt hundreds of thousands of Catholics were inspired, comforted, and strengthened by the Holy Father's presence in this country, and by what he said, but I neither see nor sense any change among our rulers, and very little among our bishops. (In fairness to Archbishop Vincent Nicholas, head of the Church in England and Wales, however, he did issue a pastoral letter after the visit, in which he urged us to be more open in our Catholicism by, for example, making the Sign of the Cross in public and by saying "God bless you" more often.)

Perhaps some of the lower clergy will be more bullish. I hope so, because the Holy Father sent out one very clear signal during the Masses he celebrated here: At each of them he gave communion on the tongue to people who were kneeling. How many noticed? Very few, I'd say. The week after the visit I dropped in to Westminster Cathedral to see if I could find a priest willing to absolve me of all the sins against charity I had committed while the Pope was here. The place was packed with worshipers for a sung Mass. As I walked down a side aisle, Communion was being distributed, and all the communicants I saw (before I placed my eyes in custody) received in the hand, as usual. If these people were at some point in the future to keep their hands to themselves, then Benedict would have achieved a very big bounce.

When it comes to what is called "the life of the nation," meanwhile, talk of bounce is surely wishful thinking. (Was there a Benedict bounce in the United States two years ago? Well, you elected Barack Obama . . .)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The British are indifferent to religion, which is why the Protest the Pope crowd failed so dismally in their efforts to disrupt the visit. I love my people, but it sometimes seems that all they really care about is TV, sex, booze, soccer, and curry. It is true that David Cameron spoke warmly of the Pope, but his words were just feel-good. He has more in common with Maureen Dowd than with the Vicar of Christ, as do most Conservatives. He and they are for abortion, for embryonic-stem-cell research, for "gay marriage," and (naturally) for contraception. The prime minister is not (as he might put it) living in the Dark Ages.

But British indifference does not mean that there was no nastiness before and during the Pope's visit. Of course there was. That's what you get in a liberal democracy. Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens (I recommend a prayer to Dorothy Day in his case), Polly Toynbee, and the militant gay activist Peter Tatchell all did hit jobs, Tatchell at the rate of about one per day. The rock chick Julie Burchill said the real reason the Church was against abortion was that She needed a reliable supply of young children to feed the lusts of pervert priests. (Julie is now in her 50's, and she can't do the abuse as inventively as she once could.)

All the same, and in spite of the pedophile-priests story that has been running all year, the Pope's visit was an outstanding success. Far from being hostile, the BBC coverage of the first state visit by a reigning pontiff to Britain was generous and respectful. Even unfriendly newspapers accepted that they had misjudged the mood. All this evidently made a big impression on Benedict, who, when he returned to Rome, declared that in Britain "the Christian heritage is still strong and ever active at every level of social life." If you say so, Holy Father. Still, while he was here, the Pope was rather more nuanced and, for example, reminded politicians that there was more to moral principles than social consensus. In his address to the bishops at Oscott seminary, furthermore, he spoke of the Church's political and social responsibilities:

> As you proclaim the coming of the Kingdom, with its promise of hope for the poor and the needy, the sick and the elderly, the unborn and the neglected, be sure to present in its fullness the life-giving message of the Gospel, including those elements which call into question the widespread assumptions of today's culture.

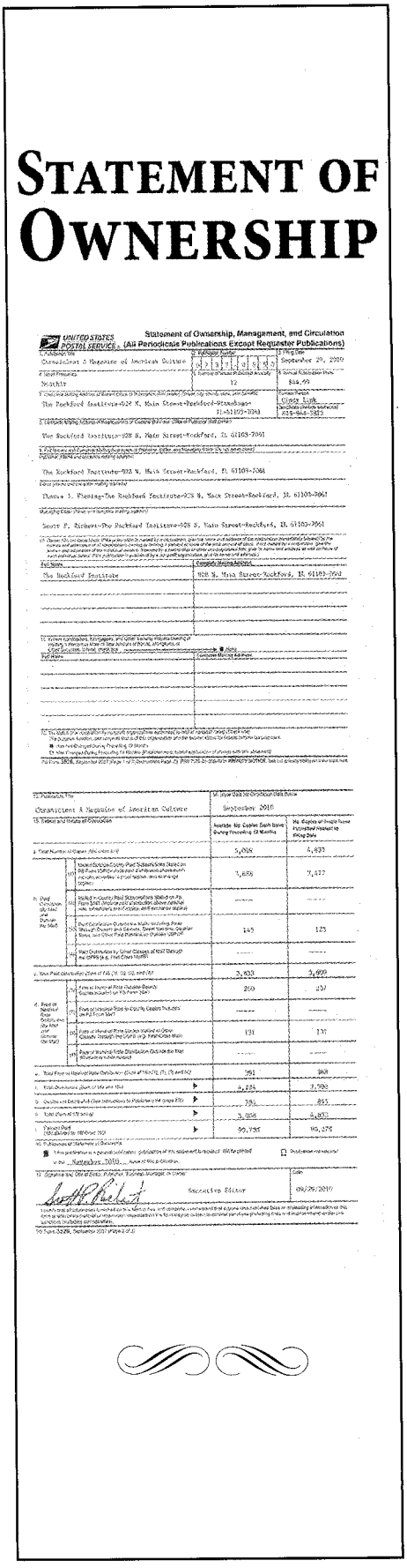
But perhaps his greatest moment came when he spoke to schoolchildren in the London suburb of Twickenham and challenged them to become saints. "Being highly skilled in some activity or profession is good," he said,

> but it will not satisfy us unless we aim for something greater still. It might make us famous, but it will not make us happy. Happiness is something we all want, but one of the great tragedies in this world is that so many people never find it, because they look for it in the wrong places. The key to it is very simple—true happiness is to be found in God. We need to have the courage to place our deepest hopes in God alone, not in money, in a career, in worldly success, or in our relationships with others, but in God. Only he can satisfy the deepest needs of our hearts.

"The deepest needs of our hearts." *Cor ad cor loquitur*, Heart Speaks Unto Heart, was Newman's motto and the theme of the Pope's visit. Here Benedict XVI spoke to the hearts of schoolchildren, but also to all of us, even seniors.

That's bounce enough for me.

Stuart Reid, a former deputy editor of the Spectator, *writes the column* Charterhouse *for the* Catholic Herald.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In Search of Flannery O'Connor

by Jeff Minick

In late June, a friend and I traveled into Central Georgia, looking for Flannery O'Connor.

Mary Ann had never heard of Flannery O'Connor. She didn't know Hazel Motes from a hole in the ground and assured me she had never encountered "A Good Man Is Hard To Find" or "The Life You Save May Be Your Own." Mary Ann's literary tastes run in a different stream, and she was strictly along for the adventure.

All of that notwithstanding, it was Mary Ann who finally conjured up the spirit of Flannery O'Connor for us.

That Saturday morning we dropped from the Carolina mountains into Piedmont Georgia and followed Route 441 toward Milledgeville, where O'Connor spent the last 13 years of her short life—she died at 39 of lupus—living on a nearby dairy and beef farm with her mother, Regina. Driving into town from this farm, which the family called by its original name of Andalusia, meant for O'Connor a three-mile jaunt through pastures, barns, and scruffy pine. Corporate America has since set its stamp on Milledgeville, and that same stretch of road is today a plastic strip of motels, fast-food restaurants, shopping malls, and outlet stores.

At Andalusia we parked in a gravel lot behind the house. The custodians of the property have retained nearly all of the 500-odd acres formerly owned by the O'Connors. Surrounded by oak, cedar, and walnut trees, the outbuildings were in varying states of repair. It was hot and dusty, and we didn't trouble to walk to all these buildings, though I was fascinated to see that directly behind the house a small barn lay collapsed upon itself, with an enormous old iron washpot upside-down in the wreckage. Beside the fallen barn was the water tower, painted white, which figures in some of O'Connor's stories. Off to one side of the yard was a coop holding three peacocks—O'Connor was famous for keeping such birds—whose shrill cries occasionally startled the air of this quiet place.

The outside of the house, with its large screened-in porch, its various abutments, and its red and apparently freshly painted tin roof, appeared in good repair. Around one of the second-floor windows buzzed a swarm of honeybees, an incongruous detail which I felt sure O'Connor, had she seen such a sight, might have worked into one of her stories.

Inside the house were the rooms that I had hoped would evoke in me the spirit of O'Connor's writing. Here in the kitchen were the white metal sink, stove, and cabinets so prevalent among kitchenware in the first half of the 20th century. Here was the Hot-Air Refrigerator O'Connor had bought for her mother with the television proceeds of "The Life You Save May Be Your Own." In a bookcase in the combination parlor and dining room there lay open a copy of *Pinocchio* in which O'Connor as a girl had scrawled some of her earliest literary criticism: "This is absolutely the worst book I have ever read. Don't read it."

The small gift shop at the back of the house carried O'Connor's books as well as some tourist items: coffee cups, pens, cards. Mark Jurgensen, who was operating the shop and the tours that day, spoke to a small group of visitors for five minutes or so about O'Connor's life at Andalusia and how she had written most of her important work here.

O'Connor's lupus made getting around troublesome, and so she lived at the front of the house in the spacious room that might otherwise have served as the parlor. Standing in the doorway, I looked at the bare room with its faded carpet, its typewriter and desk, the crutches leaning against a plain dresser, the tidy single bed, the cracked and peeling paint of the walls. (The foundation is trying to raise money to make these repairs.)

"This place is Jerusalem for me," a Massachusetts man said to Mary Ann when she walked to her car for her purse. "I've read everything she's ever written and everything ever written about her."

Jerusalem it is to those who love O'Connor's writing, but something—her spirit, her presence—was, for me, still missing. It was missing when we later visited the Flannery O'Connor Room in town at the Georgia College and State University, where we found other items belonging to O'Connor, including another typewriter and desk. The presence I sought was missing when we stood at her grave in Memory Hill Cemetery. It was missing when we took the trolley tour of Milledgeville and later, too, when we attended Mass at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, sitting just a few pews back from those habitually occupied by O'Connor and her mother.

What was absent, I realized by day's end, were O'Connor's people, the characters of her short stories and novels. Neither they nor their descendants were visible. The motels and restaurants somehow seemed to hide them from view. In town, many people we met during our explorations were outlanders. Our trolley tour guide, for example, a knowledgeable raconteur who clearly loved his adopted town, was a retiree from Pittsburgh. We didn't find out much about O'Connor on our two-hour tour, but we did learn a solid amount of history. Our good guide point-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ed out that Milledgeville was the capital of Georgia from 1804 to 1868. During his March to the Sea, Sherman and his men ravaged the town, sacked the Episcopal church, quartered their horses inside, and then accidentally blew the roof off the church when they exploded a nearby town arsenal. Oliver Hardy was from Milledgeville and worked in the local movie theater; the murders behind the novel *Paris Trout* occurred here. Of the parishioners at Mass that Saturday evening, only two were originally from Milledgeville. (We found out this statistic when the visiting priest, who hailed from Michigan, joked at the end of Mass about Yankee invaders and was told by a parishioner that there were only two natives sitting in the pews.)

Yet all was not lost. I still had Mary Ann.

That next morning, as we drove back toward Commerce to catch the interstate, Mary Ann pointed out a roadside sign advertising "J&J Flea Market, Georgia's Largest." I had promised her some shopping in return for enduring my literary ambles, so we swung down a dirt road past a pretty pond into an enormous bazaar composed of weathered wooden tables, a maze of dirt roads, and a swarm of shoppers and vendors.

And here they were in their glory—whites, blacks, and Hispanics, tattooed, sweaty rednecks of all hues selling and buying old rusty tools, secondhand clothing, jewelry, "Got God?" baseball caps, lawn mowers, DVDs, watermelons, and tomatoes on this late Sunday morning. Here was the Flea Express, a trolley car, dustier and shabbier than its Milledgeville counterpart, hauling folks from one bare table emporium to the next. Here was the Dust-Buster, a broken-down old truck dribbling water out its rear end to keep the dirt from getting restless on this dry, scorching day. Here, in short, were the people O'Connor frequently portrayed in her work—a whole crew of them, like that mob seen by Mrs. Turpin in a vision in "Revelation":

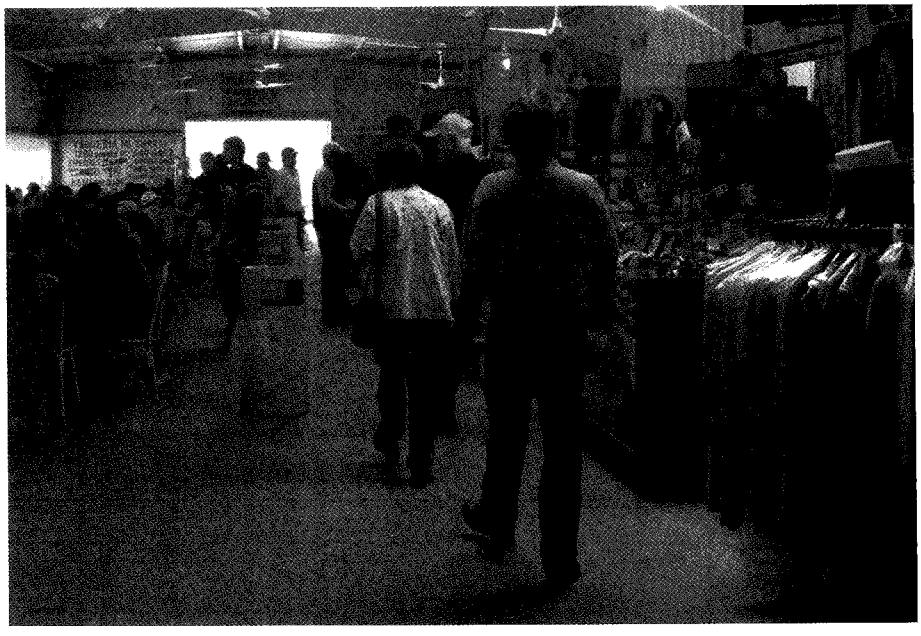
> [A] vast horde of souls were rumbling toward heaven. There were whole companies of white-trash, clean for the first time in their lives, and bands of black niggers in white robes, and battalions of freaks and lunatics shouting and clapping and leaping like frogs. And bringing up the end of the procession was a tribe of people whom she recognized at once as those who, like herself and Claud, had always had a little of everything and the God-given wit to use it right. . . . They were marching behind the others with great dignity, accountable as they had always been for good order and common sense and respectable behavior. They alone were on key. Yet she could see by their shocked and altered faces that even their virtues were being burned away.

Later, spotting a fruit stand alongside the road—why she picked this one I'm not sure; the fruit stands here seem as common as James Agee's ubiquitous tin roofs in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*—Mary Ann asked me to stop again. While she was looking over the fruit, she asked the lean young man behind the counter whether the peaches were local. "Those peaches?" he said. "Why, no ma'am. Those peaches have come out of Edgehill, South Carolina."

After this exchange, I returned home an even happier man. A part of Flannery O'Connor's people still survive out there in the Georgia hills, and a few of them even understand the meaning of the word *local* as O'Connor herself once understood it. They doubtless possess all the toys of our modern society, computers and Facebook, iPods and WiFi, and I'm sure they watch television shows like *American Idol* and *Dance Your Ass Off*, and eat Big Macs more than they do collard greens and cornbread. But there they are, those people O'Connor studied so often in her fiction, mutated somewhat by the age in which we all live, yet still recognizable.

Andalusia is no doubt Jerusalem for O'Connor aficionados, but her characters—and some of her spirit as well—live on at J&J Flea Market out on Highway 441.

For eight years, Jeff Minick has written Letter to the Bishop, *by Joe Ecclesia, for* Chronicles.



www.jandjfleamarket.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Neo-Ottomans Triumphant

THE GROUND ZERO MOSQUE and the Koran (non)burning are but two recent examples of overreported and misrepresented stories that reflect the sorry level of media discourse in the United States. Meanwhile, an event took place on September 12 that has vital importance for the United States' declared strategy in the Muslim world, in general, and in the Greater Middle East, in particular. Yet it is an even bet that not one American in a hundred can put a name to it.

On that day, thanks to a referendum on constitutional changes supported by 58 percent of her electorate, Turkey ceased to be a "secular democracy" based on Kemal Atatürk's reforms of 85 years ago. The event was either ignored by the media, or else—on President Obama's and Hillary Clinton's cue—presented as a triumph of democracy in a friendly Muslim country that provides America with a vital bridge between the East and the West. In reality, it was the final step in a long sequence of moves by Turkey's Islamists, who have been in power for the better part of the decade and now feel strong enough to proceed with their endgame.

Over the past eight years, Prime Minister Rejep Tayyip Erdoğan's government and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) have been successful in undermining Mustafa Kemal's legacy and the character of the state founded upon that legacy. What remained, until the referendum, was an increasingly hollow shell of constitutional secularism. That shell was nevertheless an obstacle to the formal grounding of the new legitimacy in Islam at home and neo-Ottomanism abroad. Erdoğan and his team were determined to remove it, and on September 12 they succeeded. Turkey's voters approved a 26-article package that will end the army's role as the guardian of secularism. On current form, there is but little doubt that Erdoğan will be reelected by a simple majority when he calls the general election next spring—yet more proof that "democracy" in the Muslim world means more Islam.

The process was predictable, and it was facilitated by the self-deception of our "foreign-policy community." As I noted on *ChroniclesMagazine.org* many years ago ("Who Lost Turkey?", April 2, 2003), the Bush administration was fatally mistaken to pretend—as Paul Wolfowitz did earlier that year—that Turkey was "a truly indispensable nation" with an "indispensable partnership with the United States," a nation "central to building peace from Southeastern Europe to the Middle East and eastward to the Caucasus and Central Asia . . . crucial to bridging the dangerous gap between the West and the Muslim world":

> In his pitch to the West Mr. Erdoğan is unsurprisingly eager to minimize his party's Islamic connections by stressing his "secular" and "conservative" credentials. His assurances were keenly accepted in Washington . . . During a recent trip to Turkey by The Rockford Institute's fact-finding team we were repeatedly warned that things were no longer as they used to be a decade ago . . . The escalating crisis of Turkey's economic and political system over the past decade reflected a deeper malaise, the loss of confidence of the old Kemalist elite. The implicit assumption in Washington—that Turkey would remain "secular" and "pro-Western," come what may—should have been reassessed after the Army intervened to remove the previous pro-Islamic government in 1997. Since then many voices . . . have warned that "democratization" would mean Islamization, and that America needed alternative scenarios and regional strategies.

Fast-forward to the fall of 2010: Erdoğan and his team claim that the constitutional reform has no other purpose than the country's further democratization. Practicing the Islamic art of *taqiyya* (lying to infidels) in its pure form, foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said that the referendum was all about advancing civil rights and Western-style liberties, that it reflects "the Turkish nation's will to live in a freer and more democratic environment in compliance with European Union standards." It is "an important turning point for democracy in Turkey," he continued, and "a result of the Turkish nation's interest in the reform process carried out in light of universal and European norms." With an eye to the cultural Marxists in Brussels, he also noted that the amendments introduced "constitutional guarantees for positive discrimination for women, children, the elderly and the disabled."

With the predictable exception of once-ultra-Turkophile neocons, Washington's self-deception is continuing. Only

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hours after the polls were closed in Istanbul, during a telephone conversation with Erdoğan, President Barack Obama praised the "vibrancy of Turkish democracy" by citing high turnout in the referendum. The following day State Department spokesman Philip Crowley said the United States "hopes" the reforms endorsed will "further enhance Turkey's democratic process and human rights protection." Asked if he disagrees with the claims of Turkish secularists that the changes will inhibit the judiciary's ability to "oversee" the executive, Crowley replied that this was, in fact, a

> decisive vote to move towards greater civilian oversight of these democratic institutions . . . We respect that statement by the Turkish people. And we hope that the government will, again, use this mandate to deepen democratic processes in Turkey as well as guarantee human rights protections.

Crowley ended by reaffirming U.S. support for Turkey's membership in the European Union.

THE REACTION IN ISRAEL was quite different. Amos Gilad, a senior Defense Ministry official, warned that Erdoğan was rapidly dismantling the secular state. "If there is not a change in personality," warned former National Security Council director Uzi Dayan, "then Turkey will become Iran No. 2." In the *Jerusalem Post* (September 22), Caroline Glick noted that Turkey's Islamist leaders have used the Western language of democracy to destroy its foundations, while Washington and the European Union acted as enablers. NATO was also complicit, she went on:

> NATO has stood at a distance as Turkey has undermined its mission in Kosovo and transformed it into a virtual Turkish colony. So too, NATO has had no comment as Turkey has worked consistently to disenfranchise Bosnia's non-Muslim minorities and intimidate the Serbian government. At this late date, it would have been shocking if NATO had a comment of any kind on the AKP's consolidation of its Islamist thugocracy.

The supine posture of Brussels and Washington may have been predictable, but the rapid and terminal loss of confidence of the old Kemalist elite, which had been expected to put up more of a fight, was not. But Erdoğan and the AKP had succeeded in obtaining the compliance of the secularist elite in the crucial early years, seducing them with the vision of an autonomous sphere of Turkish influence in the old Ottoman domains in the Middle East, the Caucasus, and the Balkans. This activist foreign policy has enabled the Islamists to co-opt many senior civil servants, diplomats, and generals who are not sympathetic to the ideological assumptions of the neo-Ottoman paradigm, but who were ready and willing to support its "quantitative" aspects. They subscribed to the ostensibly traditional, nationalist components of Davutoğlu's neo-Ottoman concept of multilayered "strategic depth," without realizing that it was a Faustian pact.

In May 2009, on the day of his appointment as Turkey's foreign minister, Davutoğlu asserted that Turkey had an "order-instituting role" in the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Caucasus, quite apart from her links with the West: "Turkey is no longer a country which only reacts to crises, but notices the crises before their emergence and intervenes in the crises effectively, and gives shape to the order of its surrounding region." He further declared that Turkey had a "responsibility to help stability towards the countries and peoples of the regions which once had links with Turkey"—an explicit reference to the Ottoman era, in a manner unimaginable only a decade ago:

> Beyond representing the 70 million people of Turkey, we have a historic debt to those lands where there are Turks or which was related to our land in the past. We have to repay this debt in the best possible manner.

For the sake of Turkey's renewed status as a first-rate regional power, the secularist elite were prepared to close their eyes to the fact that Islam is the backbone of the project. Back in the fragile days of 2002-03, the AKP leadership wisely grasped the need for the secularist nationalists to be given a slot in the national consensus on Turkey's multilayered identity. Those days are now over.

MANY WEIMAR OFFICIALS, *Wilhelmstrasse* diplomats, and top officers of the Reichswehr were likewise not supportive of the Nazis when Hitler came to power. Yet during the early years of the Third Reich, they were willing to offer their services to his revolutionary project in the name of promoting traditional German national interests and objectives. In early 1938 they were inevitably swept away by a fresh wave of *Gleichschaltung*, heralded by the removal of General Von Blomberg and foreign minister Konstantin von Neurath.

With September's referendum, Turkey's Islamists are finally able to do the same to the Kemalist civil service and army cadres. The aim of the Kemalists, for many decades before Erdoğan, had been to resist the lure of irredentism abroad, and to turn Islam into a matter of personal choice separate from the Turkish state and distinct from Turkish society.

It could not be done. The Kemalists' replacements, steeped in Islamism and neo-Ottomanism, are being groomed at the lower levels of the hierarchy as I write. ◆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Philip Jenkins

Myths of Terrorism

IT'S BEEN A BAD YEAR for terrorism in the United States. Not bad, fortunately, in the number of actual attacks (at least at the time of this writing), but in the continuing debasement of the word *terrorism*, so that it ceases to be a useful characterization of behavior and becomes merely a propaganda slogan for interest groups.

The U.S. Supreme Court contributed to this sad process when, last June, it decided the case of *Holder* v. *Humanitarian Law Project*. The State Department maintains a list of so-called Foreign Terrorist Organizations, and U.S. law prohibits giving support or aid to these groups. In *Holder*, the Court decided that this blanket prohibition applied when sympathetic groups were merely providing advice to alleged terrorist organizations, even when that counsel was intended to push the recipients in peaceful or constitutional directions.

What's wrong with that decision is the whole concept of "terrorist organizations." For scholars or professionals, terrorist acts can be defined clearly. They are acts of violence carried out by organized groups, in order to serve a political purpose, and (critically) they are directed against civilian targets, usually with the goal of creating fear or intimidation. Armed attacks against military objectives are not terrorism. U.S. law, sensibly, defines *terrorism* as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents." The cause in which such acts are committed is irrelevant to the definition.

But "terrorist organizations" are a very different matter. Countless groups around the world undertake terrorist acts, but only a tiny proportion are officially defined as terrorist organizations. In U.S. law, the term applies to groupings that "engage in terrorist activity," but with no sense of the proportion of the group's actions that fall into this category. Does a single terrorist action qualify a group for legal perdition? Must the group carry out, say, 25 percent of its acts against noncombatants before qualifying? In the real world, a movement might commit terrorist actions at some times, while at others it would better be described as a guerrilla movement or even a political party.

Nor is the labeling process applied with any consistency. The term was never applied to the Provisional IRA, although that movement regularly slaughtered noncombatants. (The tiny successor group Real IRA has subsequently qualified for inclusion.) Nor did Washington label the African National Congress of the early 1990's as a terrorist group, although, on rare occasions, it did target civilians. On the other hand, the damning classification invariably includes Hamas, which likewise alternates between terrorist and guerrilla actions.

Even more questionable, a group can be labeled if its "terrorist activity or terrorism [threatens] the security of U.S. nationals or the national security . . . of the United States." And who exactly decides that? In the context of the late 1980's, we might think that the Provisional IRA was clearly undermining U.S. interests, by striking at a vital ally. Alternatively, who is to say that any and all violent acts against the state of Israel automatically subvert U.S. national security?

There's no great mystery here. The definition of organizations as terrorist is a negotiated political process, subjective and partisan in nature, which depends on the interest groups that bring their efforts to bear. The key question is whether or not the U.S. government, or a substantial part of the political establishment, sympathizes with the movement and its cause. In the Irish or South African cases, that question is easy: We (or a lot of us) like the groups, so they aren't terrorists. Hamas has few influential defenders.

Another case in point is the Lebanese Hezbollah, which undoubtedly has carried out terrorist attacks through the years. On other occasions, though, as when the movement was fighting Israel in 2006, it looks much more like a guerrilla army resisting foreign invasion. No such nuances, however, prevent the group from being firmly included on the State Department listing.

Holder segued perfectly into the thorny Ground Zero Mosque controversy of this past summer. Without exploring the rights and wrongs of that case yet again, one lively issue in the debate was whether the mosque's sponsor, Imam Feisal Rauf, was sympathetic to terrorism. After all, crowed critics like Andrew McCarthy, Rauf could not bring himself to admit that Hamas is a terrorist organization. "Hamas is a shibboleth. If you want to know whether an ostensible Muslim 'moderate' is really moderate, ask him if Hamas is a terrorist organization," wrote McCarthy in *National Review*. "It is not a complex question . . . It is a straightforward question that Islamists complicate with clever casuistry." Rauf failed McCarthy's test. And so would virtually any competent terrorism scholar, of any faith or none, who knows just how tendentious the question is. ◆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dan Daly

A FRIEND recently sent me an e-mail with a link to YouTube. A click took me to a tribute to Col. Bob Howard, broadcast by *NBC Nightly News* anchor Brian Williams upon Howard's death just before Christmas 2009. Howard is one of our most decorated heroes, his courageous and brilliant acts in combat worthy of multiple medals. The tribute was moving, beautifully delivered, and certainly welcomed by those of us who complain that the mainstream media does next to nothing to honor American heroes. Considering all that, I feel a bit curmudgeonly to mention that Williams made two surprising misstatements, claiming that "Bob was the only man ever to be nominated for the Medal of Honor three times. . . . But you can only receive one Medal of Honor per lifetime so that's what he got in 1971 from President Nixon." For the record, there is no limit to the number of Medals of Honor one can receive—19 men have been awarded two—and Dan Daly, a double recipient, was recommended for the Medal of Honor three times.

That children in our politically correct public schools are no longer taught such things is bad enough, but it is especially disturbing that a national newscast and a highly respected news anchor would share in such ignorance. Moreover, in the pantheon of military heroes, Dan Daly is among a chosen handful. The son of Irish immigrants, Daniel Joseph Daly was a wiry and scrappy little guy who fought many a battle on the sidewalks of New York before he enlisted in the Marine Corps in January 1899 at the age of 25. Daly hoped to fight in Cuba in the Spanish-American War, but by the time he had finished training the Caribbean phase of the war was over, and he was ordered to the Asiatic Fleet.

DURING THE BOXER REBELLION, Private Daly volunteered, all by his lonesome, to defend the Tartar Wall, on the south side of the American Legation in Peking, until more Marines arrived. When darkness fell, Chinese rebels hit Daly's position. With a machine gun and his rifle and bayonet, Daly fought through the night. At the break of day Marine reinforcements arrived and found Daly resting and smoking his pipe. Below the wall were 200 dead rebels. Daly was awarded his first Medal of Honor.

Responding to what became known as the Tampico Affair in 1914, Marines were landed at Vera Cruz. Leading the first platoon ashore was Gunnery Sergeant Daly. The fighting became widespread and intense, with Daly always in the thick of it. Maj. Smedley Butler would earn the Medal of Honor for the fight at Vera Cruz but forever after said the decoration should have gone to Daly.

IN 1915, Butler and Daly were together again, this time in Haiti, leading a mounted patrol of three-dozen Marines who had been attacked by 400 Haitian rebels. The Marines desperately needed their only machine gun, lost when the mule carrying it was shot and tumbled into a river, now behind rebel lines. When the night turned pitch black, Daly set out alone to retrieve the weapon. He stealthily slipped by most of the rebels but had to knife three of them silently. Diving repeatedly into the river and swimming underwater, he located the dead mule. He then unstrapped the machine gun and its ammunition and hoisted the more than 100-pound load onto his 5'6", 132-pound frame. He crept back the way he had come, made easier by his earlier elimination of three sentries. At dawn, with the machine gun barking, Butler and Daly led an attack on the rebels, killing 75 of them and sending the rest fleeing. For his actions Daly was awarded his second Medal of Honor.

DURING WORLD WAR I in France, First Sergeant Daly and his company of Marines were pinned down by twice their number of Germans at Belleau Wood. With artillery and machine-gun fire ripping holes through the Marine ranks, Daly sprang to his feet and yelled, "Come on, you sons of bitches! Do you want to live forever?" Tossing grenades and firing his Colt .45, Daly single-handedly took out three German machine-gun nests, while his boys destroyed others. The attack turned the tide of battle at Belleau Wood. Daly was recommended again for the Medal of Honor, and the recommendation was endorsed up through the chain of command. When it came to John J. Pershing, commanding general of the American Expeditionary Force, he exclaimed that no one should have three Medals of Honor and reduced the decoration to the Distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest award for valor in the Army. Since Daly was a Marine, he was also awarded the Navy Cross.

Dan Daly was awarded two Medals of Honor and recommended for a third. He should have had four. Altogether, he was awarded seven medals for valor.

He's a legend in the Marine Corps, but evidently not on the nightly news. ◆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On the Sullivan Translation of David, Part II

by Timothy Murphy

This is the second part of a speech on poet Alan Sullivan that Timothy Murphy has delivered to Catholic and Protestant congregations on the High Plains. (The first part appeared in the October issue.) Mr. Sullivan, a frequent contributor to Chronicles, *died on July 9, right after finishing his last work of translating David into meter.*

NOW LET US CONSIDER Psalm 51, perhaps the greatest of the Penitential Psalms, which we hear in the Ordinary of the Mass.

Every Solemn High Traditional Latin Mass begins with the *Asperges me*, verse 7 of Psalm 51:

Asperges me, Domine, hyssopo et mundabor,
Lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor.
Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.

In the *Novus Ordo* Mass we no longer hear this great antiphon, which reads (in a common translation) "Purify me with hyssop, Lord, and I shall be cleansed. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." But before the consecration in every Mass the priest prays verse 2 of Psalm 51: "Wash away my iniquities and cleanse me of my sin."

Similarly, we hear verse 17 in our Masses, our catechism, in innumerable homilies: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, God, you will not despise." We are told that, in the Primitive Church, every service closed with the congregation reciting Psalm 51 in its entirety. Without Psalm 51, the Mass would be much diminished.

Poems of penitence, poems of praise and consolation, poems of unspeakable curses which we never hear in church—David's emotional range is as immense as the figure portrayed for us by Samuel. Then there is the matter of prophecy, of great importance to David's Christian audience. It can be uncanny, as in Psalm 22, where Sullivan translates verses 16 to 18 thus:

Curs encircle me;
a band of villains
has closed around me:
so would a lion
pinion my hands and feet.
I would tell it in my bones.
They would gawk and gloat,
apportioning my clothes,
casting lots for my garments.

Did Christ have these lines in mind when he watched the Roman soldiers doing just that and cried out from the cross, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*?" ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?") He cried out in Aramaic, our Lord's everyday speech, but of course His *crie de couer* is the opening line of David's 22nd Psalm.

And let us consider Psalm 2, cited three times in the New Testament. Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 13, and Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, quote the seventh verse: "You are my son; this day I have begotten you." And in the third chapter of Acts, when Peter and John are released by the Sanhedrin, they go forth rejoicing; and they quote the opening of the poem: "Why did the Gentiles rage and the peoples entertain folly? The kings of the earth took their stand and the princes gathered together against the LORD and against his anointed." Where would we be without King David?

Here is the Sullivan translation:

Why are the nations seething
and people murmuring vainly?
Kings of the earth stand fast;
princes conspire together,
banding against the LORD,
against his anointed one:
"Let us break their bonds
and cast aside their cords."
Seated on high, he laughs.
The LORD regards them with
scorn,
then speaks to them wrathfully,
fills them with fear of his fury:
"I have set my anointed king
on my holy mountain, Zion."
I will repeat the edict;
the LORD has said to me:
"You are my son; today
I have begotten you.
Ask me, and I will grant
the nations for your portion;
the utmost edge of the world
shall be in your possession.
With an iron rod you will break
them,
smash them into pieces
like potters' earthenware."
Think carefully, you kings.
Be warned, you judges on earth,
and serve the LORD with awe.
Be glad, but tremble also.
Pay your homage sincerely
lest the LORD be angered,
and you be swept from the path
when his wrath is barely lit.
Happy are all who shelter in
him.

David writes in two and three beat lines, occasionally in four. But Sullivan makes no attempt to replicate David's meters or preserve his presumed lineation. Classical Hebrew is far more economical in syllable than is Modern English. Unlike our polysyllabic, Latinate vocabulary, Hebrew can incorporate tense, person, gen-

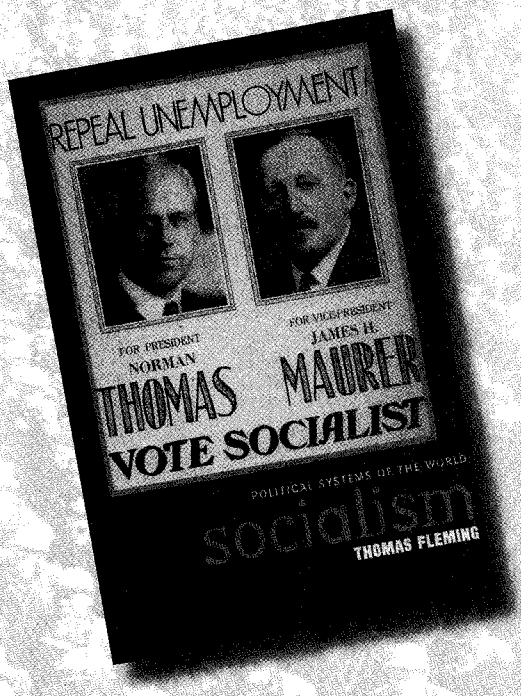
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

der, and number, as well as subjective and objective pronouns and even many conjunctions, as compacted prefixes and suffixes to verbs and nouns. In the poetry of the Psalms, these are compacted further. It is the reverse of the problem Alan and I faced in our translation of the *Beowulf*, where Modern English is so much more economical than the Germanic-inflected Anglo-Saxon. No, Sullivan's concern is to make a faithful rendition an effective poem in its own right in our language, and early on he realized that he had to "catch a tune" appropriate for every psalm.

Let's look at another of the great ones, Psalm 33, where Sullivan begins with trimeter, three-beat lines. Then when the tone of the original shifts, Sullivan gives us a block of four-beat lines, tetrameter, then compresses the great coda of the poem back into trimeter. It is a strategy he frequently found himself employing in many variations.

Rejoice in the LORD, you
righteous;
the praise of the just is fitting.
Adore the LORD with the harp;
strum on the ten-stringed lyre.
Sing a new song to the LORD.
Play it with skill and verve,
for the word of the LORD is pure,
and all that he does will endure.
He loves justice and judgment.
The earth abounds with his grace.
By the word of the LORD was the
firmament made;
from the breath of his mouth
sprang heavenly hosts.
He gathered the sea-waters,
rounded them out;
he vaulted the deep to hold them
like treasures.
Let the whole world revere the
LORD;
let earth's dwellers be struck with
awe.
He spoke; all was. He enjoined;
all stood.
The LORD annuls the designs of
nations;
he frustrates human
contrivances.
The LORD's design endures
forever,
his heart's intention for all
generations.
Blessed, the people whose God is
the LORD,
the nation granted inheritance.
The LORD looks down from
heaven,
beholding the sons of men.
From his dwelling place he
presides
over the dwellers on earth.

THE LATEST BOOK FROM THE EDITOR OF *CHRONICLES*



Socialism

by Thomas Fleming

From the Political Systems of the World series by Marshall Cavendish Benchmark

For as many teachers, students, politicians, and pundits who are ready to explain the thought of Engels or Rousseau, there are definitions of SOCIALISM. To understand a political or social theory, however, it is not enough to know its intellectual history. One must also learn how the theory manifested itself in the lives of men throughout time and around the world. In his latest book, the author of *The Politics of Human Nature* and *The Morality of Everyday Life* does both with clear and lively prose undergirded by unparalled expertise.

Hardcover • 144 pages • $32.95
(includes shipping and handling)
Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

SOCI

- **send check or money order to 928 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103**
- **make checks payable to The Rockford Institute**
- **call (800) 383-0680 to order with MasterCard, Visa, Amex, Discover**
- **purchase online at the webstore on *ChroniclesMagazine.org***

SOCI

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He formed their hearts alike;
he assesses all their deeds.
No king will be reprieved
by the hugeness of his host;
no mighty fighter saved
by strength, however great.
A horse is a phantom of safety,
its vigor secures no escape.
The LORD's eye lights on the
reverent,
on those who yearn for his
goodness
to rescue their souls from death,
to keep them alive in famine.
Our soul has awaited the LORD:
he is our help and shield.
Our heart will rejoice in the
LORD
for we trusted his holy name.
Bestow your grace, O LORD,
in accord with our yearning for
you.

David's relationship with God is of a loving intimacy we would all do well to imitate in private prayer. Indeed, for all the beauty and power David's poems give to our public prayer, our liturgies, they have an equally lofty value in teaching us how to pray. For all his astonishing achievement, rising from a shepherd boy's obscurity to unify the tribes of Israel and settle Jerusalem as the capital of the nation, David has much for which to atone. A military genius, he was a great killer, and indeed the people sang of him as they danced: "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." Coveting Bathsheba, he sends her husband to certain death. His prowess arouses the envy and nearly deadly enmity of Saul. His son Avshalom (Absolom) rebels against him and, trying to overthrow his rule, is killed.

A genre of lyric now neglected is the flyting, the curse on one's enemies, and David was its inventor and master *nonpareil.* He implores the LORD to smash his enemies like potsherds, to break their jaws, to make them portions fit for foxes as the dogs lap up their blood. When I was sorely beset by certain bankers and lawyers, I asked my spiritual advisor whether I could call down David's curses on my enemies, and he patiently explained that since Jesus died for our sins, saying, "Forgive them for they know not what they do," that outlet is closed to the people of the New Dispensation.

I have memorized and recited poems from childhood on, most all of them in English, because for me it's the English poems in rhyme and meter that sing out in performance. That has not prevented me from studying poetry in translation and being deeply influenced by the thoughts of my great predecessors with whose tongues I have scant or no acquaintance. Having engaged in verse translation, I know how unspeakably difficult it is to smuggle a foreign text into our language, to produce an English poem which is both "true and beautiful." I believe the Sullivan translations come closer to that ideal—far closer—than any translations of David I have read, and I have read enough to wallpaper a cathedral. And this is not just any poet. More than any poet, more than Dante, more than St. John of the Cross (even as translated by Rhina Espaillat), more than Donne, Herbert, Milton, or Hopkins, more than all of them put together, David brings us to God. Since my return to the Faith I've written many poems that quote and converse with David, and I'll close with one that owes its merit to four of its eight lines being David's, not mine.

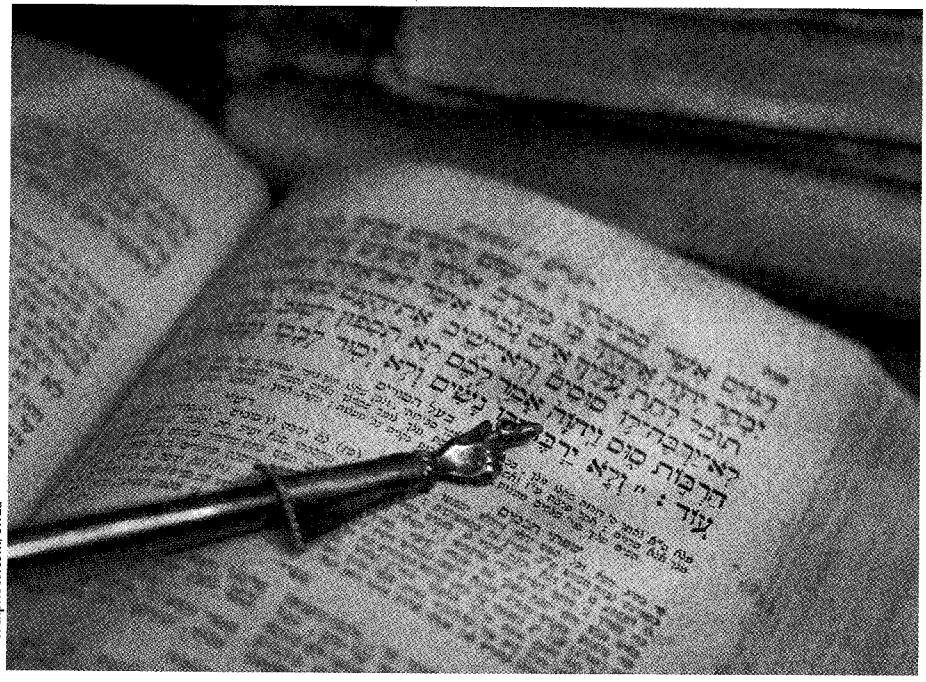
To The Chief Musician

"Break the teeth in their mouths,
O Lord," he cried.

We Christians can no longer pray
this way
to Him our mortal sins have
crucified,
but at our funerals we often say:

"Where shall I find my refuge
and hold fast
except under the shadow of Thy
wings
until all my calamities are past?"

So, from antiquity, King David sings.

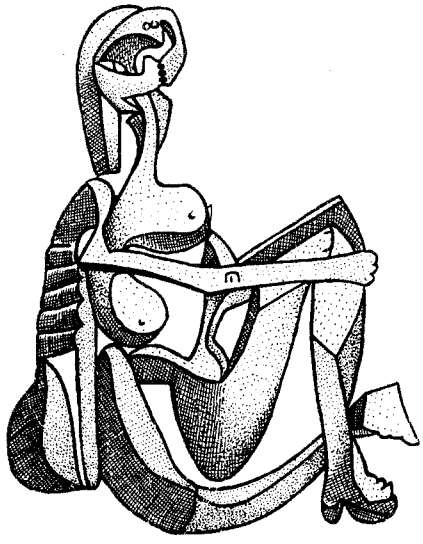


©iStockphoto.com/orrza

Timothy Murphy is the author of several collections of poetry, including Very Far North *(Waywiser Press).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Welcome to Our New & Improved Catholic Religion



In the "Bad Old Days," We Said:	Now Supposedly Enlightened, We Say:
the House of God	worship space
St. Mary's Catholic Church	St. Mary's Catholic Community
hymn	song
Holy Sacrifice of the Mass	liturgical festivities
sacred Host	bread
precious Blood	wine
Transubstantiation	[huh?]
priest	presider or presbyter
Bishop Smith	Bishop Bob
The Holy Father	that bishop in Rome
Kingdom of God	Realm of God
Our Father in Heaven	Our Parent in heaven
"…God and His love"	"…God and God's love"
Son of God	Child of God
Our Lord Jesus Christ	the Christ figure
A.D. (*Anno Domini*)	C.E. (Common Era)
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Our Woman of Guadalupe
husband and wife	partners
shack-ups	partners
orthodoxy	fundamentalism
dissent, heresy	creative fidelity
sin	alternative lifestyles
Hell	[shhh!]
May God bless you.	Have a nice day.

It's been said that language shapes our understanding of reality, that he who controls the language controls the future. Does it seem as if we're being subtly coaxed into a new religion, a religion that cravenly mimics the surrounding culture?

Well, we at the **New Oxford Review**, an orthodox Catholic monthly magazine, refuse to go gently into the dark night of some weird new religion. We stand with the Catholicism of the ages — with the Magisterium — and articulate the full splendor of Catholic truth. We even help confused or intimidated Catholics figure out what's going on — and develop a backbone.

We're published out of the "People's Republic of Berkeley," so we've seen fads galore. And we've seen fads become trends, and trends become the accepted wisdom — that is, when good people fail to resist.

Karl Keating of Catholic Answers has called us "Catholicism's intellectual prizefighter." If you're a Catholic who refuses to go with the worldly flow, subscribe today!

SPECIAL RATES FOR READERS OF *CHRONICLES*

- ❑ One-year subscription ..... **$17** (regularly $19)
- ❑ One-year student, unemployed, or retired person's subscription ..... **$14** (regularly $16)
- ❑ Two-year subscription ..... **$27** (regularly $35)
- ❑ One-year non-U.S. subscription ..... **US$26** (regularly $29) Payment must be drawn in U.S. Dollars.
- ❑ Sample copy **$3.50**

➔ The prices offered here are *so low* because you can't pay by credit card and payment must accompany order. Send this coupon with check payable to NEW OXFORD REVIEW.

Name (Please print or type)

Street Address or P.O. Box

City State Zip

Mail to:

new oxford review
Room 801
1069 Kains Ave.
Berkeley CA 94706

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Borrowers' Crisis

by Mark G. Brennan

LIKE THE MINDLESS DAY TRADERS of the 1990's who piled into the same hot internet stocks, today's commentators on the causes of 2008's residential-real-estate implosion have exhibited a similar obtuseness regarding the workings of financial markets. One will search in vain for any article that identifies a party other than Wall Street or large commercial banks as the primary villain in the crisis. Writing in the *New York Review of Books* on August 19, Frank Rich cited "the widespread conviction that the White House tilts toward Wall Street" at the expense of "those who suffered most in the Great Recession"—*i.e.*, average Americans. Jonathan Alter, in his recent biography of President Obama, identified a "colossal injustice" resulting from the real-estate collapse and subsequent recession. Alter furthered the antifinance narrative as he predicted that "wealthy bankers" would be made whole for their real-estate losses while average Americans would be left footing the bill. Even *Chronicles* writers have joined the populist crusade to blame the titans of finance. "The big banks . . . caused the trouble" read the August *American Proscenium* ("How To Succeed in Banking Without Really Trying," William J. Quirk), which pointed the finger at Wall Street as the root cause of our current troubles.

An unsophisticated hatred of finance capital makes for strange bedfellows.

The arguments of leftists like Rich and Alter do have some merit. The federal government used every fiscal and monetary trick in its repertoire, constitutional or not, to save the economy in the fall of 2008. Two years after that nerve-wracking autumn we now see government policies that would shock even these skeptical writers. As detailed in Professor Quirk's article, the Federal Reserve Bank's Zero Interest Rate Policy (ZIRP) has funded the commercial banks' economically unproductive "carry trade," in which those same commercial banks borrow funds from the Fed at no cost and reinvest the proceeds in U.S. Treasury securities yielding over three percent. This textbook example of "rent seeking" behavior by the banks is offensive enough on its face. When we realize that this monetary giveaway is fueling our latest asset bubble in government bonds, anger and fear are the only sane responses.

No one denies that large financial institutions played a major role in the real-estate shenanigans of the last decade. Politicians will publicly blame the banks for taking advantage of their financially unsophisticated constituents. The press will be reluctant to blame consumers' profligate ways, lest they alienate readers. Yet the usual practices of politicians and journalists blind us from a painful truth: For every mortgage lent, there was a borrower who sought that loan.

Mortgage brokers and small banks profited by writing mortgages to unqualified borrowers. And what about those unqualified borrowers? I struggle to sympathize with real-estate buyers who jumped into the booming housing market by putting no money down, buying houses beyond their financial capacity, and then flipping their artificially inflated assets to the next sucker. Had banks, both large and small, exercised even minimal prudence with their depositors' funds they would have turned down $40,000-per-year landscapers buying that third investment condo in Las Vegas. Likewise, bank depositors, lulled into complacency by federal deposit insurance, slept soundly knowing that the insolvent FDIC would protect them from their banks' idiotic lending practices. Instead of reviewing their depository institutions' readily available balance sheets, American savers spent much of 2007 arguing about which washed-up celebrity shook his booty best on *Dancing With the Stars*.

A recent article in the *New York Times* exemplified both the media's reluctance to blame anyone other than the lords of finance and the spendthrift ways of opportunistic Americans who tried to exploit rising house prices. The *Times* piece detailed the tribulations of a 42-year-old unionized roofer in Philadelphia on the verge of losing his house, "the only house in which he had ever lived," through foreclosure. Such an economic calamity is indeed a tragedy, yet Christopher Hall's predicament, which the *Times* represents as a typical case of a big bad bank abusing a little borrower, is more complicated than the paper's portrayal.

Christopher Hall purchased his house for $44,000 from his grandfather in the mid 1990's at a time when his $1,000 weekly earnings easily covered his fixed-rate mortgage. But sometime in 2006 Mr. Hall opted to consolidate some higher-rate credit-card debt and finance renovations on his house by borrowing against his equity in it. Instead of just increasing his mortgage balance outstanding, he opted, with the help of a "for-profit credit counselor," to take out an adjustable-rate loan. When the interest rate on his mortgage adjusted, Mr. Hall saw his monthly mortgage payment rise from $500 to $950, clearly unsustainable on his $1,000 weekly income. At his foreclosure hearing last fall Mr. Hall admitted, "When I got the mortgage, I didn't really understand it." Neither, apparently, did his for-profit credit counselor.

Sadly, Hall's case uncovers several of the explosives borrowers stepped on as they sprinted across the minefield of ever-rising house prices between 2002 and 2008. Many homeowners opted to bor-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

row against the equity in their property to fund current consumption. Why wait for your earnings to grow over time when you can tap into your home equity right now? That equity would always be there. House prices could never go down, or so they thought. And why pay six percent for a fixed-rate home-equity loan when you could get the same loan on an adjustable basis for three percent? As Christopher Hall can now tell you, adjustable-rate loans tend to adjust. And they only adjust upward, never down.

Few events in life generate more stress and anguish than the loss of one's residence. Compassion and charity are the proper response to all the displaced families right now. But we must also remind those who had a hand in their own economic difficulties of their responsibilities. If we fail to do so we should expect this crisis to repeat itself for as long as Americans own houses. Sure, the banks lent to borrowers who put no money down, who opted for adjustable-rate loans, and who used the equity in their houses to finance current consumption. But right across the table from the bank officer who rubber-stamped these now-toxic mortgages sat a borrower who gladly accepted those easy loan proceeds. This carefree borrower will do so again if he is not made to recognize his feckless behavior. Ditto for the bank officer.

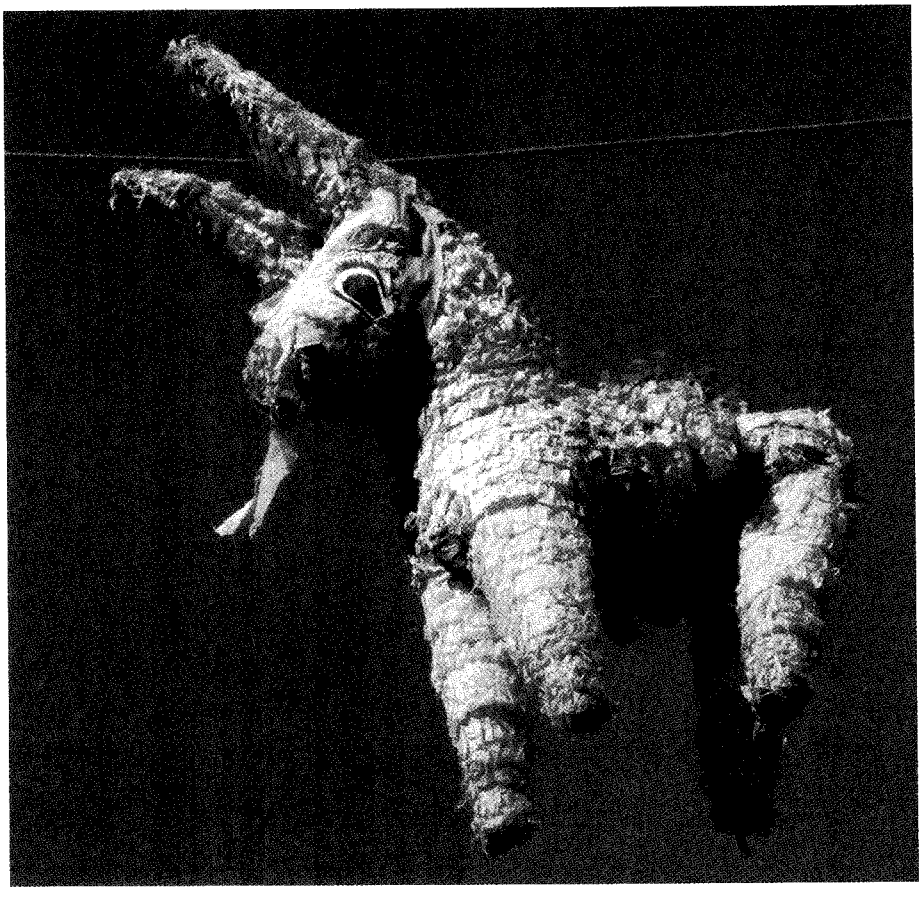
Skeptical market observers, along with that minority of Americans who exercised a modicum of financial responsibility during the real-estate market's Potemkin boom, can now comfort themselves only by wishing a plague on both their houses. But whatever comfort we derive from such thoughts will be short lived. Reality will set in as we recall the new $8,000 federal housing tax credit (just extended by Congress this past June) and the future inflationary effects of the free money—some $23.6 trillion, as Professor Quirk ominously highlighted—that flew off the Fed's printing presses and into the maws of any bank motivated enough to ask for some.

Imagine an eight-year-old Mexican child's birthday party. Family and friends have gathered for the highlight of the affair, smashing the *piñata*. Suspended by a thin string from the ceiling, the fragile *piñata*, like the global economy, functions well until external shocks shatter it. Suddenly, central-bank monetary interventions and government-housing policies disrupt the equilibrium in the same way the stick punctures the *piñata*. Combined, these exogenous factors hit the economy with the same accuracy (read: very little) and intent (reckless assault) as the birthday boy's wild swings. Yet the birthday boy, much like politicians looking to ingratiate themselves with voters, continues to flail at the behest of the crowd gathered around him playing the role of the press in inciting politicians to fix the crisis.

Once the *piñata* breaks, candy showers the floor like tax credits, postponed foreclosures, and mortgage write-downs that lenders have to eat. The parents all yell for the eight-year-old to continue his wanton attack just as the press has urged on politicians in their crusade to bring down finance capital. The birthday boy's *amigos* scramble for the fallen loot like American homeowners sopping up the rewards for their decade-long abrogation of personal financial responsibility. With the party at full tilt, mariachi music blaring from the stereo, and lights flashing throughout the neighborhood, the residents next door, like responsible American taxpayers who did not jump headfirst into the heated real-estate market in search of an easy buck, wonder what other indignities they will have to endure until the fiesta ends. "At least," the neighbors mumble to themselves, "this nightmare will end when the last shot of tequila has been drunk."

Sadly, America's housing fiesta shows no signs of ending.

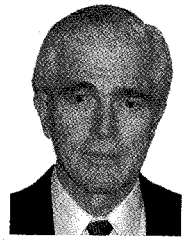
Mark G. Brennan writes from New York City.



©iStockphoto.com/sassy1902

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Farewell (*L'affaire Farewell*)
Produced by Christophe Rossignon and Pathe Films ♦ Directed by Christian Carion ♦ Screenplay by Christian Carion and Eric Raynaud ♦ Distributed by Neoclassics Films



They All Laughed

After 20 years, we finally have a film that dramatizes how Ronald Reagan won the Cold War. Needless to say, it's not an American production. In the land of the free, we have been relentlessly schooled to believe it was Mikhail Gorbachev who won the engagement by wisely allowing his Soviet Union to melt into history's inevitability. However odd, this view may explain why American filmmakers have been chary of the material French director Christian Carion has bravely explored in *Farewell* (L'affaire Farewell).

You'll know just how bravely if you remember our responsible media commentators' response to Ronald Reagan in 1983 when he proposed his plan to render nuclear weapons obsolete. They viciously mocked his dream of creating a space-based antimissile shield officially dubbed the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). It was a fantasy, they sneered. The then-resident analyst-in-chief at the *New York Times*, Anthony Lewis, averred that Reagan had lingered too long in Hollywood. The codger really couldn't distinguish between reality and the movies. *Time* called SDI "Star Wars." Others howled that this maniac was going to abrogate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. It would be the end of that humane *status quo* known as MAD, the stalemate policy of Mutually Assured Destruction. Stop the war criminal before he blows up the world!

At the time, I thought SDI sounded awfully optimistic. Of course, I had no better insight into its technical feasibility than the redoubtable Mr. Lewis. Thus, I decided to be agnostic on the Reagan program. That was until I learned the Soviets had begun research into how to install their own SDI. This mightily suggested there was something to Star Wars after all. If the program had any chance of succeeding, didn't we owe it to ourselves and the rest of the world to try it? No, the media thundered. No, not at all! It would be unconscionable. We'd be upsetting those poor Russians, and something would surely happen.

Well, our press corps was right: Something did happen. The Soviet Union began to fall apart six years later. Had he been a man interested in revenge, Reagan could have stepped into the public spotlight and had a last laugh at the expense of his critics. But, unlike other politicians, he was curiously indifferent to tit for tat. His interest was to bring the madness of nuclear stalemate to end. And he did for a while.

Later on it came to light that the Gipper might have been bluffing all along, or at least hedging his bet. He may or may not have been convinced of SDI's efficacy, but he was pretty sure that announcing his intention to develop the system would be enough to break the Russians' will. How did he divine this?

According to Carion's film and the research behind it, Reagan played his hand skillfully with the help of an obscure KGB colonel named Vladimir Vetrov. An engineer by training, in the 1970's Vetrov had been stationed with his family in Paris, where he acquired Western tastes in literature, liberty, and cognac. When he returned to Moscow, he bridled under the oppressive and sclerotic Brezhnev regime. He was especially outraged by the Soviet decision to rely on Western R&D to develop Russian science and technology. Instead of pursuing pure science, the Russians had made a science out of stealing high-tech information from their rivals, especially America. Doing so, however, they stifled their own homegrown scientific talent. Not surprising. In a thoroughly centralized and relentlessly politicized milieu, being original is a high-risk occupation. Propose a new way of doing things, and you might step on bureaucratic toes and find yourself ostracized—or worse. The infamous case of Lysenko exemplifies the consequences. Having won Stalin's support, poorly educated Trofim Denisovich Lysenko advocated harebrained agrarian theories that all but wrecked Russian farming through the first half of the 20th century, forcing Soviet citizens to suffer through extensive food shortages. Many Russian biologists and horticulturists were well aware of Lysenko's quackery, yet no one could stop him. Those who tried risked losing their jobs. Some were sent into the Gulag; others simply disappeared. With Stalin on his side, Lysenko shut down honest criticism.

Against this historical example, Vetrov knew it would be useless to speak out publicly in his own country. He decided, instead, to save Russia from herself by betraying her. He contacted a French engineer working for his company in Moscow and began feeding him information concerning Moscow's pilfering of Western science. His information revealed that, in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the realm of high-tech innovation, the West was, in a sense, competing against itself. It was up against its own purloined technology wielded by Soviet hands.

When French intelligence was notified, they code-named Vetrov "Farewell" (as in farewell to all that, I suppose) and gave his revelations to President François Mitterrand, who then shared it with President Reagan at the G-7 summit held in Toronto in 1981. At first stunned, Reagan and his aides soon came to recognize the Russian operation for the opportunity it was. Rather than roll up the spy network immediately, they decided to allow it to function so they could sabotage Russian technology. Let the Russians continue using their agents to steal our computer software and other high-tech design information. We would have our programmers and designers introduce destructive codes and faulty parts into our programs and technology. Soon, Russia was experiencing industrial disruptions, communication failures, and weapons mishaps. By placing a Trojan horse into computer chips designed to manage valve pressures, in 1982 our computer engineers indirectly caused an explosion in the Trans-Siberian gas pipeline so massive that NORAD, looking at it from space, at first feared it was a nuclear detonation.

The Russians seemed to be flummoxed by the Reagan-initiated response to their thievery. Then came the *coup de grâce*. Reagan ordered the CIA to roll up their spy network in 1983, effectively stanching the flow of strategic information to the Soviet Union. Following this, Reagan announced SDI. The Soviets were no longer privy to America's arms innovations, and they were hobbled by an economy knocked silly by their disastrous Afghan adventure. Gorbachev realized that the game was up.

In my favorite scene, Carion shows Reagan (Fred Ward) and an aide watching scenes from John Ford's *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*. At first, I assumed Carion was echoing the American press, which claimed Reagan was so besotted with movie fantasy that he was unable to grasp reality. But Carion's point is quite the opposite. The President is especially interested in the scene in which the idealistic tenderfoot lawyer played by James Stewart finds himself lured into a seemingly hopeless duel with the skilled gunman Valance. Against all odds, Stewart kills the outlaw. Reagan indicates approvingly that Ford shot the scene twice so that, in the second sequence, we can see what really happened. The camera drops back, and we see that John Wayne has clandestinely come to Stewart's aid, shooting Valance from a darkened street before Valance gets a chance to kill Stewart. "See," Reagan exclaims, "in the film, the point of view changes. It's a masterpiece." His aide looks a bit puzzled but agrees dutifully with his boss. Carion's point seems to be this: Reagan was a strategist who skillfully deployed his public persona—here represented by his friend in his former profession, Stewart—as a decoy. The Soviets were encouraged to think they were up against a hopelessly fair-minded, naive opponent when, instead, they were dealing with a thoroughly hardened bushwhacker (represented by Wayne). When later the aide asks what he wants to do with the Farewell revelations, Reagan chuckles. We'll "wipe out their network and play poker. It's a lot more fun when you know your opponent has a lousy hand."

In his fictionalized account of the events, Carion focuses primarily on Vetrov, who has been renamed Sergei Gregoriev, played by Serbian film director Emir Kusturica. Gregoriev's French contacts have become one man, the fictional Pierre Froment, played by French director Guillaume Canet. I don't know that directors who also act bring added authority to their roles, but the choice works brilliantly here. I would have preferred Carion to have kept to the facts, but I can see the risks in doing so. Films can't help abbreviating the truth, and I respect his desire to avoid the charge of falsifying the Vetrov story.

Carion wanted to show us the impact of international political machinations on private lives. As played by Kusturica, Gregoriev comes across as a proud man disgusted by his country's leaders and the culture of abject compliance they have fostered among the Russian people. He wants to change this but now, in middle age, doesn't expect to benefit from his actions in the time he has left. He hopes to force reform in Russia for his son and his generation. Froment is quite different. As an ordinary man who has taken Western freedom for granted, he seems to be blithely unaware of the oppression with which Russians must daily contend. By allowing himself, however reluctantly, to become involved with Gregoriev, he gets a harrowing crash course in totalitarianism. He finds himself meeting the colonel in parked cars, subways, park benches—none of them particularly hidden from public view: Conducting their business in plain sight is safer than trying to hide. Gregoriev knows what Froment doesn't: In 1980's Moscow everyone was liable to be under surveillance.

In one instance, Froment detects Russian soldiers following him into a subway station. Not knowing what to do, he walks up to a newsstand. As he does so, a stout, thuggish man slips through the crowd behind him, reaches out and grasps the arm of an ordinary looking woman in her 50's standing alongside the trembling engineer. A slight nod of the thug's head, and the woman walks off with him unprotestingly. The news agent continues to do business with a customer, not once giving evidence of having seen a thing. It's a chilling vignette of life in the police state.

As good as all this is, the film makes some missteps toward its conclusion, when Carion introduces some flourishes that damage—if only slightly—his story's credibility. The facts need no melodramatic adornment; they're compelling enough on their own. ◆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Taki Theodoracopulos

Stoned in the Desert

"PEOPLE WERE VERY HAPPY seeing this" was the quote in the *New York Times* report about a couple being stoned to death after they tried to marry without permission. About 200 villagers took part in the stoning in the Kunduz Province of Afghanistan, including the man's brother as well as other relatives. It was a festive occasion, and the crowd cheered as the unfortunate couple expired. Nice, as they say in Brooklyn, a New York province. In Badghis Province, Northern Afghanistan, the festivities continued when a 48-year-old widow, made pregnant by a man who had promised to marry her, was given 200 lashes and then shot to death. Her crime: fornication. Again, very nice. Finally, two brides, 13 and 14 years old, were also flogged within an inch of their lives for trying to flee their husbands. This took place in Ghor Province, which I assume is a more liberal one, although no one can attest for certain whether it was named for an American vice president or one of our greatest living writers.

Never mind. The point is that Afghanistan was, is, and always will be a mess, a savage antediluvian society not fit for the shed blood of American soldiers. The reality is that we took sides in a complex civil war that has been running since the 1970's, siding with the north against the south, town against country, secularism against Islam. It is as simple as that, and let no Washington con man tell you any different. We installed a government corrupt as any in history, one that has discriminated against the Pashtun majority, and we have refused to accept the facts on the ground: that the Taliban are the authentic voice of rural Pashtun conservatism, and that the Kabul government has excluded them. The only solution is to negotiate with the Taliban and get out. Anything else is bound to end in disaster.

Instead, we are proceeding with a plan to equip an army of 500,000 Afghans at a cost of two billion dollars *per annum*, an army that will break and run faster than any South Vietnamese unit did back in April 1975, or better yet, the courageous Kuwaiti defenders back in 1990 against Saddam's tanks. This is a very bad joke, but no one in D.C. seems to be getting it. This shadow Afghan army/police actually performs double duty: It works by day for the Kabul government and by night for the Taliban. The officer corps makes the South Vietnamese one look like West Point graduates.

LOOKING BACK makes the tragedy of Iraq seem a lesser one, if that is possible. We stormed Afghanistan nine years ago to root out Al Qaeda. The fragile society we were supposed to be fighting for was always nonexistent. We chased out the bad guys—those who don't want girls to go to school, those who don't like music or beauty or pleasure—who fled to the lawless regions of Pakistan. Then we installed a clown-crook by the name of Karzai and turned our attention to Iraq—*Eiraq*, as our great leader Bush put it. The trouble is the bad guys came back with a vengeance—if they had ever left, that is. Their invisible army is undefeated because you can't kill what you can't see, although we have killed plenty of innocents, minding their own business, with our drones.

And there's something else—an historical fact that our leaders tend to overlook most of the time. Afghan warriors have clobbered every foreign invader since the great Alexander, and he lived 2,300 years ago. The Afghans know how to fight foreigners and how to deal drugs. Hamid Karzai, whose brother makes Escobar look like a penny-ante pot dealer in Times Square, pardons drug dealers the moment our forces capture them. In the meantime we are told that our presence there is to maintain security only for as long as it takes the Afghan army/police to be ready to take over the job themselves. It's the biggest con since the invention of three-card monte, yet our politicians continue to send American men to die there. I know that the Army's task is to do and die and not to ask the reason why, but this is a crime of immense proportions.

IN THEORY, Afghan soldiers are recruited from all over the country. In reality, the majority is from the north, Tajiks and Uzbeks. At least one quarter deserts every year. They listen to their own warlords, not to any NATO commanders. Most recruits are the dregs of local societies, all of them illiterate, undisciplined, and spaced out on drugs. These are our allies. We already know all about our enemies.

So please keep this page, and the next time some slick politician begins to tell you how we are making progress in Afghanistan, show it to him, then shove it down his throat. You'll be scoring a point for truth. ♦

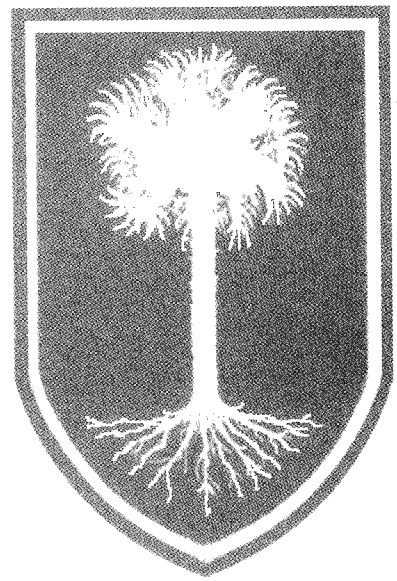
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NINTH ANNUAL ABBEVILLE SCHOLARS' CONFERENCE

"The South and America's Wars"

The Cape Fear Club • Wilmington, North Carolina • February 25-27, 2011

Southerners are rightly known as a people who value the military arts, have excelled in them, and have been inordinately represented in America's military history. What is not so apparent is the strong, if not predominant, tradition of Southern opposition to foreign war. This view of the military is defensive, embodying the virtue of loyalty and the duty to respond to offenses against honor. Southern leaders have perhaps been less motivated than other Americans by the ideological rationales given for U.S. wars ("freeing the slaves," "saving the world for democracy," etc.). Many respectable and eloquent Southern voices have been raised against most U.S. wars, and on grounds different from those of the "anti-war" left.



Topics

- What lessons did Southerners such as Nathaniel Macon, St. George Tucker, and John Taylor draw from the Revolutionary War about the place of the military in the polity?
- A new look at Jefferson's distaste for standing armies and any but a defensive navy.
- Why did John Randolph oppose the War of 1812, and how did his reasons differ from New England opposition?
- Southern opposition to Daniel Webster's call to intervene in the Greek Revolution against Turkey.
- Calhoun's opposition to the Mexican War and other hawkish temptations to empire. His conception of the "expansible army" and his policy of "masterly inactivity."
- Southern *versus* Northern reasons for fighting in the War Between the States.
- Southern resistance to the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II.

. . . and much else.

Speakers: Clyde Wilson, Donald Livingston, Carey Roberts, John Devanny, Joe Stromberg, Col. Jonathan White, and others yet to be invited.

Cost, Accommodations, and Tours

Lectures in The Cape Fear Club, a private club, tracing its origins to 1852.

Rooms in the Wilmingtonian, a short walk away. If booked before December 24, rates are $79 (Thursday) and $115 per night (Friday and Saturday), for a double or single. Ask for the special rate at (910) 343-1800. Conference fee of $125 includes two suppers, one dinner, and tour.

Wilmington was the last port of the Confederacy. **Walking tours** of Confederate Wilmington are offered. A short drive away is Fort Fischer, under whose protective guns the blockade was run.

Inquiries: contactus@abbevilleinstitute.org • (843) 323-0690
www.abbevilleinstitute.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Rockford Institute and Chronicles *present*

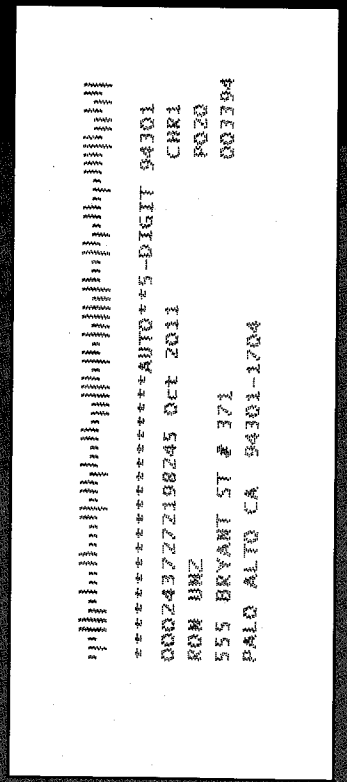
The John Randolph Club

Charleston • November 10-14, 2010

Come discuss the restoration of local control of political, economic, and cultural life with a convivial meeting of The John Randolph Club at the Mills House Hotel, Charleston, South Carolina.

This special Randolph Club program includes:

- a reception, dinner, and opening address (Wed., Nov. 10)
- a half day of panels, a group lunch, and a walking tour (Thurs., Nov. 11)
- a half day of panels, a walking tour, and a reception (Fri., Nov. 12)
- a half day of panels, a walking tour, and a closing banquet and program (Sat., Nov. 13)



Registration

JRC members: $475.00 per person
Regular: $525.00 per person

Hotel

A very special rate of $157.27 per night, single or double occupancy, is available at the Mills House Hotel. Reservations must be made no later than October 11 by calling (843) 577-2400 and mentioning The John Randolph Club.

Speakers include Thomas Fleming, Donald Livingston, Kirkpatrick Sale, Jack Trotter, Clyde Wilson, William Quirk, and Tom Landess.

To register, call (800) 383-0680. For the latest information, visit *www.rockfordinstitute.org/events.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED